GROTIUS
HIS
ARGUMENTS
For the Truth of
Christian Religion;
Rendred into plain *English Verse.*

———*Ubi quid datur otî*
Illudo chartis; hoc est mediocribus illis
Ex vitiis unum———
Hor. Serm. Lib. 1. Sat. 4.

IMPRIMATUR,
Dec. 16. 1685. *Z. Isham.*

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To the Honourable

ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

SInce your Command seem'd to
suppose me fit;
To this Attempt I could not but
submit:
How difficult soe're, who could refuse,
When such Encouragement supplies a
Muse?
Yet this that leisure and recess requires,
Which one, of Avocati'ons, but desires.
If I could envy what I truly love,
Or rev'rence rather, as advanc'd above;
Your Life, your *Genius*, would that En-
vy raise,
Happy beyond my hope, beyond my
Praise.
Did not this Great Civili'an (*a*) Verse
adorn,
My Vein, whate're it were, might
merit Scorn,
As if I were to nothing better born:

(*a*) Vid. Grot. Poemata.

By it I never can expect a Name;
And most Men may my wronging *Grotius* blame;
While the ill-natur'd Criticks often smile,
To find his (*b*) *Dutch* excel our *English* Stile.
If I can lull the Cares of Life asleep,
'Tis the chief benefit I look to reap:
While you, of all the wise Man's Joys possest,
Out of the reach of mortal chances, rest:
From whence, with so much charming force, do flow
Treasures of Knowledg unto us below.
Had not your choice anticipated Mine,
I might have mingled Dross where (*c*) you refine,
Embasing with low Verse that Chain of thought,
By which to Faith Reason's Subjecti'on taught,
And the sublimest Truths to its embraces brought.

(*b*) Vid. Grot. ad Bignonium, p. 1. *Patriæ meæ sermone.* p. 3. *versibus inclusi.*

(*c*) Vid. *Considerat. about the reconcilableness of Reason and Religion. ed. An.* 1675.

To the Reader.

WEre it my expectation, or design, to gain a Reputation for Verse, I should have chosen a Subject more suited to move the Affections; without humouring of which, the smootheſt Rythms please the the generality no better than Pictures in dead Colours.

Non satis est pulchra esse Poemata dulcia sunto, Hor. de arte Poet.
Et quocunq; volent animum auditoris agunto.

Verse should be soft, and sweet, as well as fair,
Moving the ravish'd Soul like fluid Air.

Yet as those Commands, which ennoble these Endeavours, were entirely with respect to publick benefit: if I can attain that end, tho with the censure of being an ill Poet, or what perhaps would be worse for me, a tolerable good one; I shall be content, with King David *dancing before the Ark, to appear* vile, *or* like one of the vain Fellows. *I must confess, I had not finish'd this Task, before I met with a* 2 Sam. 6. 20, 22.

Tranſlation of this Book into Engliſh Proſe, by an excellent Hand, which might have ſeemed juſtly to ſuperſede my farther Progreſs. But I cannot but believe that many may be willing to divert themſelves with this, who would think the other not ſufficiently entertaining; for which I take leave to apply that of the admirable Herbert;

A Verſe may find him who a Sermon flies,
And turn delight into a Sacrifice.

Meaſure is at leaſt an art of Memory, an help for the treaſuring up thoſe thoughts which may inrich our Minds; ſuch I am ſure Grotius's *are; and what ſo well deſerve to be thought on more than once, that I am confident many, who have read both the Latin and Engliſh Proſe, nay, and the original Dutch Verſe too, will not think their time loſt in reading the ſame Arguments repeated, in ſuch a way as I have repreſented that Impreſſion which they made upon my Mind. Wherein I muſt needs ſay, I never labour'd for a ſecond Thought, if the firſt, without offending againſt the common rules, or* (a) *practice of Verſe, ſeem'd clearly to expreſs* Grotius's *Senſe; nor hunted about for taking Epithets, or Flowers; but left Truth, and dry reaſoning, to their natural Energy, if not Graces.*

(a) *This warrants the frequent uſe of a Verſe two Feet longer than the reſt.*

To the Reader.

I cannot but flatter my self, that in several places I have removed some Clouds, and made the Arguments more easy to be comprehended, by taking from their length.

The Truths here propounded, are of that nature, that me-thinks the Mind should be eager to come to the proof of them, and impatient even of Ornaments which may detain from the full view of their delightful Features.

If however this Version appear dull and flat, I hope it will be considered that it is but a Copy of a Copy; and if I had understood the Original Dutch Poem, as I should have had more assistance to Fancy, I know not but I might have offered here something more Poetical.

Yet still it must have been as careless and unlabour'd as now it is, unless I could have stolen more time from a Life not unactive, than I fear the Critiques will think, I have already but thrown away on this occasion.

Ad Virum Ornatiſſimum ——— de Veritate Chriſtianæ Religionis ab eodem in Verſus Anglicanos traductâ.

BElla canant alii nullos habitura triumphos,
Et malè converſos cognata in viſcera cives,
Victoreſq; ſui populos, dum vincitur Hoſtis
Qui conſanguineum genus eſt; aliiq; theatris
Spe lucri, aut auræ nimio popularis amore
Perpetuô inſudent, quibus & ſua carmina vendant;
Furtivos narrent alii, ſua crimina, Amores,
Et quæ Bella gerunt, Veneris dum caſtra ſequuntur.
Nobilius moliris opus, dum ſacra profanis
Poſthabitis modò bella canis, ſeu fundere verſus,
Seu vitam verâ pro Relligione paratus.
Nobiliora canis, dum Relligionis avitæ
Impulſus ſtudio, facili ſacra dogmata venâ,
Et rerum à primâ deducis origine cauſas.
Macte igitur virtute novâ; myſteria tantùm
Voce quidem, at ſtrictâ, ſtricto velut enſe tuêris.
Exemplar ſuperavit opus, mihi crede, nec undæ
Purius ex ipſo jam ſemper fonte bibentur.
Pegaſidas quiſquis duxit te primus ad undas
Non leviter tinxit, ſed pleno flumine merſit;
Nam modo vitales *Grotius* ſi duceret auras,
Non alium ambiret vatem; tam divite fundis

Quæ

Ad Virum Ornatiſſimum, &c.

Quæ non ſola fides docuit myſteria venâ :
Seu canis eſſe Deum, ſeu preſſiùs occinis unum
Eſſe Deum tantùm, ſeu quæ miracula Chriſtus
Edidit, enumeras, ſeu Chriſti dogmata veris
Annumeranda canis, ſeu fortè objecta repellis :
Nec tantùm *Grotium* tibi debeat Anglica Tellus ;
Munus & illa tuum magni præſaga Maronis
Pars fuerit, (*a*) rurſus mundo Saturnia Regna
Quæ ſpondet, ſobolemq; novam, Cœleſtibus ortam
Oris progeniem, *magnum Jovis Incrementum.*
Nec tantùm vates, legumq; peritus ubiq;
Audis ; (*b*) ſed quæ etiam fudêre Orâcla Sibyllæ
Linceus æquatis appendis lancibus, idem
Et *ſophus*, & *vates*, & *conſultiſſimus æqui.*

Accinebat David Abercrombii,

M. D.

(*a*) Virgil's *fourth Eclogue, containing the Cumæan Sybil's Prophecy, tranſlated.*

(*q*) *An Appendix in Proſe concerning Prophecies and Predictions, particularly the Sibyls.*

To

To my Learned, and Ingenious Friend ——— on his Translation of *Grotius de veritate Religionis Christianæ*, into English Verse.

WHat pains of old did Great Lucretius take
To shew such Gods, as did Mankind forsake?
Unthinking, useless Beings, free from pain,
Did lazily in endless Pleasures reign.
A State so base, no Gen'rous Heroe wou'd
After his death, voushsafe to be a God.
But you on happier Theams your Thoughts employ,
Which those fantastick Notions quite destroy;
In charming Numbers mystick Truths rehersе,
And prove a Powerful, Active God, in Verse.
You shew him Great, Just, Merciful, and Good,
By whom all things are made, all understood.
The Night is Day to him, his piercing Ray,
Do's all the Secrets of our Souls display;
Our Thoughts, e're they proceed to action,
He knows, and all our Actions when they'r don.
No Grove, no Cave, no Cloud is so obscure,
Can from our God a guilty Head secure.
The Heav'nly Vengeance does like Lightning pierce
The dark Recesses of the Universe:

Yet

To my Learned and Ingenious Friend, &c.

Yet takes of humane Race propitious care,
Sees, and knows ev'ry thing, is ev'ry where.

The Noble Building Learned Grotius *rais'd,*
By you adorn'd, is doubly to be prais'd.
You to his Arguments, and weighty sense,
Have added Beauty, and Magnificence.
So to an Ancient Church, plain built, and low,
Wren *gives an higher Roof, and Cupalo:*
Long rows of Pillars the whole Frame support,
And that which was God's House, becomes his Court.

Hail great Apostle *of the* Muses, *hail!*
May your Example o're their Sons prevail,
To change Parnassus *for your Sion Hill,*
And all their Minds with divine Raptures fill.
Ill Plays, false Satyr, empty Songs no more,
Henceforth prophane our hallow'd British shore;
Before your Ark may their lewd Dagons *fall,*
And you without Dragoons *convert them all.*

J. E.

To

To his worthy Friend——on his Verſion of *Hugo Grotius*, of the Truth of Chriſtian Religion, into Engliſh Verſe.

'Tis not, Dear Sir, the leaſt ambitious aim
Of being noted for Poetick Flame,
Or with exalted your's to mix my Name;
That now invites my Muſe to celebrate
Thoſe praiſes, you have juſtly got of late:
But as a Tribute to our Friendſhip due,
That I this ſlender Off'ring make to you.
As Noah, *with a pious firmneſs, ſtood*
Againſt th' Aſſaults of the invading Flood,
Until thoſe happy days the welcome Dove
The Olive brought, by Orders from Above;
So you in ſtormy Weather have I ſeen,
Eaſy in Thought, and of a Mind ſerene,
Until thoſe Clouds Jehovah *did diſperſe,*
And led your ſetled Thoughts to ſacred Verſe:
And ſurely from Above you took that Fire,
For none below ſuch thoughts could e're inſpire.
For, David-*like, your charming Lyre you ſtring,*
In praiſe and honour of th' Eternal King.
But firſt of all, as a wiſe Architect,
Who, that he may unſhaken Piles erect,

Sees

Sees his Foundations ſolid are and ſure,
The only means his Buildings to ſecure;
So while Religion does your Numbers fill,
And ſweetly flows from your judicious Quill,
Your Corner-ſtone, and Principles you take
From him, who did thoſe equal Precepts make.
And firſt 'gainſt Ath'iſts you his Being prove,
And all their ſhallow Arguments remove.
With ſtrongeſt Reaſons then you plainly ſhow,
That all his Attributes from's Eſſence flow;
And this in Verſe, and terms ſo well expreſt,
As if He taught from your inſpired Breaſt.
Then by your Verſe, you liberty have giv'n
To Providence, which ſome confin'd to Heav'n;
As did Lucretius, *who had fondly taught,*
The lazy Gods of earthly things ne're thought.
In better colours you the Godhead ſhow,
And fully prove, to Providence we ow
The change & turns of all things here below.
Then next Religion, you in all its parts
Have ſurely fortifi'd, by the beſt Arts
Of Verſe and Reaſon, and to th'World evince,
That Piety ne're ſtranger was to ſenſe.
Here may the empty noiſy Town-Gallant,
Who knows no Language but the modiſh Cant,
Whoſe tedious minutes ſtick upon his hands,
And make him curſe the ſlow and lingring Sands;
By your Example learn his time t'employ
On things, that yield a ſolid laſting joy.

Thus

Thus taught by you, he ſpeedily will find,
No Pleaſures equal thoſe 'oth' pious Mind.
But tho' in well-choſe Numbers you excel,
And true Philoſophy your Verſe does ſwell;
Yet no confinement knows your active Soul,
But rifles other Arts without controul.
You into the abſtruſeſt Notions dive,
And loaded with the ſweets return from th' Hive.
Nor does the knotty Law, which few untwiſt,
Your pierting Judgment's conq'ring force reſiſt;
And tho' to ſome it takes Gigantick Form,
Yet you its Frowns and Menaces do ſcorn;
And being o'recome at your expence and toil,
The weaker Heads may bear away the Spoil.
Thus joining Law to Piety, you prove,
The Law not more of Serpent hath than Dove.

A. M.

To his Friend the Author.

Poet and Preacher, heretofore the ſame,
In dull or lucky times diſtinct became;
In pleaſing Numbers Britiſh Bards of old
To th'liſtning Crowd Religion did unfold:
In Verſe they choſe their Raptures to expreſs,
In Verſe their ſacred Myſteries to dreſs;
Religious Ardours thus they did inſpire,
And kindle with a pure Poetick Fire.
Primitive Muſes modeſt Virgins were,
Ne're ſung what might offend the chaſteſt Ear;
In lovely Dreſs each Vertue did adorn,
In ugly Shapes each Vice expos'd to ſcorn.
But now turn'd Proſtitutes, upon the Stage,
They teach not Manners, but corrupt the Age;
Their eaſy Province in our Time has been,
To raiſe our Luſt, or gratify our Spleen,
Maliciouſly to murder a Good Name,
And amongſt others, Verſe it ſelf defame.
If with more Chaſtity, and leſs of Spite,
Some modern Poets ſet themſelves to write,
It is with fulſome Praiſe to court a Friend,
And baſely flatter for ſome baſer End;
Groſly they lay the thickeſt Varniſh on,
Where Nature made the worſt Complexion:
And thus the dignity of Verſe is ſtain'd,
Apollo's *ſacred Temple thus profan'd.*
But this our Author in a pious ſtrain
The Poet *and* Divine *unites again;*
His Muſe at once doth both inſtruct, and pleaſe,
She gilds the Pill which cures the Mind's Diſeaſe.
So weak's our Appetite to what is good,
So weary grown of plain-dreſt wholſome Food,

That

To his worthy Friend the Author.

That Wit *and* Verſe *muſt ſpice it for our taſte,*
Or elſe our ſqueamiſh Stomacks chooſe to faſt.
Tho Truth more naked may in Proſe appear,
She's more alluring thus, and not leſs clear.
Happy Maintainer of our Faith in Verſe,
Proceed Lucretian Atomes to diſperſe;
Proceed Eternal Truths thus to reherſe;
Such Truths for all that Fiction may atone,
Poets did e're invent to pleaſe their own,
And make ſucceeding [*Times*] *for real ſwallow down:*
Such Truths enlightned Minds on Earth improve,
And propagate immortal Songs above.
Henceforth more ſacred ſhall the Muſes be,
And more ador'd the Art of Poeſy,
Happy Aſſiſtant of Divinity.

E. Ll.

ERRATA.

The Reader is deſired to amend with his Pen theſe following Errors in the Print; and tho the frequent falſe pointings may change the ſenſe in many places; 'tis hoped a little regard to the connection, or manner of the Expreſſions, may rectify them.

PAge 7. line 12. for *maintain*, read *obtain*. P. 15. l. 1. f. *Catallus*, r. *Catullus*. P. 33. l. 13. f. *Reins*, r. *Veins*. P. 56. l. 12. f. *ſty'd*, r. *ſtyl'd*. P. 75. l. 7. f. *Sov'raig*, r. *Sov'raign*. P. 79. l. 5. f. *compare*, r. *compares*. P. 83. l. 28. f. *conque'ſts*, r. *conqueſts*. P. 98. l. 8. f. *di*, r. *do*. ib. l. 14. r. *Holocauſts*. ib. l. 24. f. *pleas'd*, r. *pleaſs*. P. 99. l. 25. f. *whem*, r. *whom*. P. 105. in Marg. f. *at*, *an*. P. 106. l. 4. f. *ſhould*, r. *would*. P. 117. l. 6. f. *diſſawde*, r. *diſſwade*. P. 120. l. 12. f. *ſtranger*, r. *ſtronger*. P. 122. f. *to*, r. *t'*. P. 145. l. 2. f. *Depoſitory*, r. *Repoſitory*. P. 162. l. 17. f. *Eclogues*, r. *Expreſſions*.

GROTIUS

GROTIUS *his Arguments for the Truth of* Christian Religion, *rendred into plain English Verse.*

I.

That there is a God.

THings visible declare a God unseen:
Some things 'tis obvious did in time begin:
And these could never their own Beings cause;
Nothing we're sure could act before it was.
It's rise from something else it then must draw,
Which holds as well in what we never saw;
From which things subject to our Senses came,
Till that we find which always was the same,
And this is God, whatever be the Name:
A Being necessary to exist;
For else the World must have beginning mist.
This also the consent of Nations proves,
Where e're Barbarity Reason removes.
What only from Opinion rose, we see
Men often change, nor in the same agree:
This Notion always, in all places found,
Did even *Aristotle*'s Doubts confound.
Some cause is needful then to be assign'd,
Which may extend alike to all Mankind;
And this God's Revelation must be thought,
Or, a Tradition from first Parents taught:
If it's the first, you grant the thing is sought:

But if the laſt; in what's of ſo much weight,
Why ſhould firſt Parents propagate a Cheat?
If whereſoe're Humanity is known,
They the Idea of a Godhead own;
In places late found out, and long ago,
Not only with the dull, but witty too;
Theſe would unmask it, if it were deſign,
Nor could the others lay a Plot ſo fine.
If ſome in ſev'ral Ages have appear'd,
Who ſeem'd as if no Godhead they rever'd,
'Tis an Objection nothing to be fear'd:
For few they've been, their Arguments but vain,
Such as a Proſelyte could rarely gain:
'Twas not from Reaſon common to Mankind,
But ſome Diſeaſe, or Folly, of the Mind,
An affectation ſomething new to ſhow,
Like him that Blackneſs would aſcribe to Snow:
Or, no right Judgment could by ſuch be paſt,
Be'ng like the Sick, whoſe Mouths are out of taſte.
And this the rather is to be believ'd;
Becauſe from all th' Accounts we have receiv'd,
We find the beſt of Men were always thoſe,
Who with the notion of a God did cloſe.
That a diſſent from what ſo long obtain'd,
Only with Minds deprav'd its credit gain'd,
Whoſe vic'ious Int'reſts cann't a Godhead bear,
To paſs right Judgment on their Actions here,
Ev'n hence is ſeen; that whatſoer'e they fain,
Whether ſucceſſion in an endleſs chain,
Or the wild Atoms undirected dance,
Or whatſoever Scheme they pleaſe t' advance;
The Difficulties all recur, or more,
Than lay againſt what was receiv'd before.
Some ſeem to disbelieve a Deitie,
Becauſe they cann't his Sacred Preſence ſee:

But

But these, if they can any thing descry,
Must ev'n the being of their Souls deny,
Which ne're were subject yet to mortal eye:
Nor ought 'gainst this *Idea* more to strive,
Because their shallow reas'nings cann't arrive
To understand the Nature which they find;
For it belongs to the inferior kind,
Not fully to conceive of what's above:
Beasts, of Man's nature, cann't fit Judges prove;
Less, how the *few* first gave the *many* Law,
And by what methods kept the *Rout* in awe;
How Men could trace the flights o'th' starry host,
And round the dang'rous Deep in safety coast.
These things above their reach must be confest;
And Man, as he excels the down-lookt Beast,
Should think that he who made him to excel,
Does in a distance far above him dwell;
And that there is an Excellence unknown,
Because it is superiour to his own.

II.
That there is but one God.

Having thus found a Deity above,
Let's try how we his Attributes can prove:
One Proof concerning them in this does lie,
That what he is, is by necessity,
And this clearly infers the Unity;
For if we this extend to more than one,
We unto numbers infinite must run.
What does exist by necessary Law,
That Force must into act'ual being draw,
And this to single things must be apply'd;
But when we speak of gen'rals, 'tis deny'd.
Multiplications too of things we know,
From a fecundity of Causes flow;
And as the numbers of the Causes were,
So are th'effects more numerous, or rare;

But nothing caus'd the Deity to be.
In diffe'rent things we differences ſee;
Th'Eſſence, not Difference, is needful here;
Nor does one ſign of many Gods appear:
The Univerſe, a ſingle World is found,
One radiant Sun enlightens all around.
In ev'ry Man only one living Soul
Is all in ev'ry part, and in the whole.
Were there, beſides, more than one Deity,
In Pow'r and Will all abſolutely free,
How if th'Almighty Powers ſhould diſagree?
Should one be oppoſite to th'others Will,
Each could not then its purpoſes fulfil;
But this is far below a Pow'r Divine.

III. *That all Perfection is in God.*

Next, full Perfection in this God does ſhine;
Which cannot but from hence be underſtood
That whatſoe're in things we find of good,
Or a beginning had, or elſe had none;
What ne're began belongs to God alone:
That which began, being from ſomething drew,
And ſince from nothing, nothing ever grew;
It follows, what Perfections e're are ſeen
In the Effects, have in the Cauſes been;
And all muſt be from the firſt Cauſe deriv'd,
Which of Perfection ne're can be depriv'd.
What always was can no dependance bear,
Nor can an outward Cauſe its force impair:
Ne're from its ſelf a diminution came;
For all things at their own Perfection aim.

IV. *That God's Perfection is infinite.*

To theſe Perfections of the Deity,
We cannot but aſcribe Infinity;
For all the limits we in things explore,
Are that no Cauſe communicated more,
Or elſe the Subject could not hold the ſtore;

But God could nothing take from any cause;
Since, as we've shew'd, he necessar'ily was.

V. *That God is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and absolutely good.*

What acts more perfect is, than that which can't,
And things endu'd with Life than those which want;
What understands, than that which nothing knows,
And what is good, than what does that oppose.
These then we attribute to the most High,
Nor can the manner infinite deny,
His Life, his Pow'r, his Knowledg, without end,
Nor does his Goodness one exception blend.
On what's already said it does depend,

VI. *That God is the cause of all things.*

That all things owe their rise to him alone,
Who is, being of necessity, but one.
What e're else in the Universe has room,
From something divers from it self did come;
Either immediately, or in its cause,
From the Divinity beginning draws;
And this not Reason only, Sense may shew,
If we the Structure of our Bodies view.
Th'inward and outward parts for use conspire,
Without the Parents pains, or known desire,
And with an Art none can enough admire.
This shews the Excellence o'th'Sov'raign Mind,
Which made this all. Much we in *Galen* find
Our Admiration to confirm, or raise,
Where th'uses of the Hand and Eye he weighs:
This is declar'd ev'n by the Creatures mute,
Whose ev'ry part some certain use does suit,
And takes a Figure proper to its end,
To which the force of matter could not tend.
Of this Inanimates strong proof may yeild,
The Plants, and painted Glories of the Field.

Into the proof this the Waters flow,
And the the Earth by nature lie below,
These in the middle between that, and Air;
To see the course inverted is not rare,
And Waters often interspersst with Earth,
To give things Nourishment, or easy Birth.
To have a certain aim in acting, shews
A Nature understanding what to chuse;
But things not only serve their proper end,
But do the good o'th' Universe intend,
Thus against Nature Water does ascend,
Lest somewhere a Vacuity prevail,
And the great Building wanting Juncture, fail;
But such a force could never move the whole,
Unless from him who did this Mass controul.
Actions so regular in Beasts appear,
As that they from some Reason mov'd, declare;
For this observe the lab'ring Bee, or Ant,
Nor yet in others do w'Examples want,
Who without any previous trial, use
Things hurtful to avoid, helpful to chuse:
That from no judgment of their own it came
Appears, in that they always act the same,
Nor can they other things, tho less, effect;
Wherefore some foreign Reason did direct,
Or else imprint their Natures with this force;
And we to God for this must have recourse.
The Lights above, chiefly the Sun and Moon,
Shine forth for this as clear as is the Noon,
Their Courses order'd, and attemper'd so,
That sublunary things may thrive and grow:
The ready motion through the Æquator were,
But they go slenting to refresh us here,
And that each Realm the benefits may share.
As th'Earth the living Creatures does preserve,
They, where much stronger, humane uses serve;

Which

Which made even the rigid Stoicks write,
That th'Universe was made for Man's delight:
But since no Pow'r of Man could e're attain,
Over the bright Celestial Host to reign,
Nor could they put themselves under his sway;
'Tis then as some Superiour they obey;
And this must needs be that eternal Mind,
Which the vast Fabrick of the World design'd,
And the Contextures wonderfully joyn'd:
The Stars eccentrick Motions this proclaim,
Which not from matters force, but a free Agent came:
This the Positions they above maintain,
And the unequal form of Land, and main:
That this way, more than that, the Stars encline,
As in th'appointed places of the Heav'ns they shine.
The Earth in the most perfect form is found,
Which all Men must confess to be the round.
Some of its parts ev'n in Heav'ns bosom laid,
Declare the Pow'r which that Extrusion made.
Is there a Sot who can to chance ascribe,
What is more acc'rate than we can describe?
As if a casual Coalition cou'd
Make a fair Edifice of Stone and Wood,
Or Letters with an accidental cast,
Should make a Poem through all Ages like to last.
Who Geometrick Figures saw on shore,
Did thence the footsteps of a Man explore,
Knowing that Chance could ne're such things compose.
That Man began in time this also shows,
That by degrees Arts to improvement rose,
That sev'ral still successive Ages find
Places before unpeopled with Mankind,
And they their Language from some Neighbours take,
Or them who the discovery did make: Some

Some gen'ral Inſtitutions too, have been
So common unto all the race of Men,
That them not inſtinct, or collective thought,
So much as a more plain Tradition taught;
Such as was Sacrifice in pious Rites,
And Shame firſt bluſhing at unchaſt Delights,
The ſolemn tying of the Nuptial Band,
And flying inceſt tho without command.

VII. *Anſwer to the Objection concerning the cauſe of Evil.*

Nor ought we, becauſe ill does footing gain,
To raiſe a Queſtion, whether God does reign?
As caus'd by him that never did exiſt,
He made only what truly does ſubſiſt,
From what Subſiſtence has, there may proceed
Such Accidents as is an humane Deed:
He Man, and his ſublimer Mind, did make,
With a full pow'r to chuſe what Path to take;
This is a glorious liberty of Will,
Good in it ſelf, tho it produces ill:
This which is moral ill, beyond diſpute
'Twere impious to the Godhead to impute:
But it his Goodneſs does not cloud i'th'leaſt,
That what is ill, as on the Senſes preſt,
From him ſhould come, to puniſh what is paſt,
Or to induce a better Life at laſt;
Tho 'tis like Phyſick, nauſeous to the taſte.
To this the health we of our Souls do owe.

VIII. *Againſt two Principles, or Cauſes of things.*

Some from two Principles think all things flow;
The ill from one, as abſolutely bad,
As that was good, whence th'other being had:
But ſhould ſuch contrariety be found,
How could the courſe of things keep on their round?
One would the other's Workmanſhip deſtroy,
And neither it's Creation could enjoy.

Ill absolute could never self-exist,
For 'tis defect in what has something mist;
But then it's subject's to some good arriv'd,
In that of being it is not depriv'd.

That all things here below directed are
By the Almighty's Providential Care
From hence is seen, that not only Mankind,
Happy to have an understanding Mind,
But Birds and Beasts, with something in it's stead,
Tenderly cherish what themselves have bred:
That this partakes of Goodness, need we prove?
And who can from the Godhead this remove?
The rather, since no limits can be found,
Which may t'his Knowledg, or his Pow'r, give bound.
What e're is done, or to be done, he knows;
And what can hinder when he'll interpose?
What was before obsery'd * how things forsake
The Tendencies they of themselves would take,
That they may serve the common end of all,
Under this Head as properly may fall.

IX. *That the Universe is governed by God.*

* *Sect. 6.*

That the Celestial Orbs do not confine
The Infl'ences of Providence Divine,
What's said already fully may perswade
(For that exerts its force to all things made.)
The Courses of the Stars besides appear,
To be appointed for our Service here;
But that, for which another thing's ordain'd,
The more immed'ate care must needs have gain'd.

X. *Even sublunary things.*

Out of a sottish Error some contend,
That Providence don't single things intend,
But only universals; which pretence
Would bar ev'n God of his own Providence:

And things singular.

Nor

Nor can that Knowledg infinite be thought
(As God's is prov'd in what's already brought)
Which does not take in all things singular:
If thus his Knowledg, what impedes his care;
Since we in single things, as such, may view
Their proper end, and universal too?
'Tis own'd that Gen'rals through his care exist,
And they only in Singulars subsist:
If these for want of Providence expire,
The kinds of them we should in vain desire.

XI. *This prov'd from the preservation of Governments.*

The special Influ'ence of a Pow'r above,
Kingdoms and Common-wealths continued, prove.
A form of Government that first prevail'd,
Has not through many Tracts of Ages fail'd:
For this we might all Histories apply,
Where a Republick, where a Monarchy,
All the Contrivances and Plots of Men,
If they unsettle, bring the same agen;
So that against a long fixt Pow'r to fight,
Seems ev'n the Providence of Heaven to slight.
Tho Human Wisdom might preserve it long,
Yet the subjected Rabble are so strong,
Such the Vicissitudes of human things,
That none could fix them but the King of Kings.
But then this Providence chiefly appears,
When the Foundations of a *State* he tears;
This *Cyrus*, *Alexander*, *Cæsar* too,
Tartarian Cingi, and *Namcaa* shew.
These Men in things where Prudence has a share,
By far beyond its force successful are;
Nay, the uncertainty of things below,
Unto their prosp'rous Fortunes seems to bow;
When like Events to the same constant end
As 'twere by a Conspiracy do tend,

They

They argue a direction from on high:
Sometimes a lucky size turns on the Die;
But if the same an hundred times you fling,
'Tis evident it from some Art must spring.

XII. *From Miracles.*

But Miracles afford the clearest sign
Of a presiding Providence Divine,
And the fore-knowledg of Futurity,
Of which we have such Proofs as none deny:
Since God is infinite in Pow'r and Skill,
Can any thing withhold his Sov'ragin Will,
From acting and imparting to Mankind,
What beyond Nature's course he has design'd?
That very Course he did at first ordain.
But if inferiour Minds to this attain;
Much more may God, who suffers what they do,
(If they do not his full intent pursue)
In Kingdoms constituted where we live,
Who made the Law, can Dispensation give.

XIII. *Specially among the Jews; which have additional Credit from the continuance of their Religion.*

That *Miracles* have been we may believe,
If we the Story of the Jews receive;
Whence their Religion of such date we know,
Tho all things have conspir'd its overthrow:
It long has been depriv'd of humane Aid,
And ev'ry where a Scoff and By-word made;
Yet still continues, when all others move
(Except the Christian, which does that improve!)
As soon as that Authority is gone,
Which forc'd, or laid inviting Colours on.
Thus fell the *Pagan*, *Mahomet*'s does last,
Because it's Empire's date not yet is past.
If any ask me what could be the cause,
Which gave such rooting to the Jewish Laws?

'Tis

'Tis plain, it was the Miracles were wrought,
When God himself did lead, and for them fought,
And which were by a clear Tradition taught,
Which might be trac'd from Father unto Son,
Till they reacht *Moses*, and the Son of *Nun*:
Who else can think such stubborn Men as they,
Would so severe a Ritual Law obey?
Or, that a People evidently wise,
Would chuse with so much pain to circumcise?
Which other Nations needs must have contemn'd:
Nor could them in it self to God commend

XIV. *By the Truth and Antiquity of* Moses *his Story.*

Moses his Sacred Writings, where we find
These Miracles to memory consign'd;
Not only this their lasting Credit gave,
That the Tradition, which the *Hebrews* have,
Speaks him to be of God chose, and inspir'd;
But that he his own Glory ne're desir'd,
Nor sought th'advantage of his Friends, or Blood;
From hence is manifestly understood,
That his own Sins he never seeks to hide;
And the High-Priesthood to his Line deni'd,
As well as in chief Civil Pow'r to place,
Fixing them with the vulgar Levites Race:
Which shews he had no cause to falsify;
Nor did he use that Art becomes a Lie:
No varnish to set off a studi'ed Tale;
But Truth did with its native force prevail.
Consider further the unequall'd Age
Of the known Writings of this Jewish Sage:
The *Greeks*, to whom most own their Learning due,
Theirs from abroad most evidently drew,
And many Proofs 'twas from the *Hebrews* shew.
The *Attick* Laws, & *Roman*, sprang from thence,
From those which *Moses* taught did first commence.

And

XV.
By the testimony of the Gentiles.

And Men of other Rites full witness bear
Unto the Ancient Truths he does declare;
This th'old *Phœnician* Histories do shew,
As we in *Sanchoniatho* may view.
Indians, *Egyptians*, many of the *Greeks*,
Teach how the *Chaos* was to him that seeks;
How first the Animals, and Man at last,
(Man in an heav'nly mould divinely cast,
Out of the egg (for so they call't) did haste,
That Man had giv'n him pow'r o're other things;
This, among others, *Ovid* sweetly sings:
And this from Grecian Poets he did take.
That God the World into its being spake,
The *Platonists* and *Epicarmus* thought,
And he who long before in Verses brought
A rich Collection of what *Orpheus* taught.
That the bright Sun did not produce the heat,
But as it was ordain'd its lucid seat
Empedocles confest: *Catullus* too,
And *Aratus* did in their flights pursue
A fixt abode above the starry Skys;
That there's perpetual Light *Homer* descrys.
Milesian *Thales* out of ancient Lore,
That there's a God, whom nothing ever bore;
That th'Universe is fair, as by him made;
That antecedent to the Light was Shade.
With this the *Orphics*, *Hesiod* too delights,
And thence some Nations count the time by nights.
Wise *Anaxag'ras* in his search did find,
That all things came from a superior Mind.
Smooth *Aratus*, that God the Stars did make,
That from his Breath all things their life did take
Did *Virgil*, after Grecian Poets say,
Hes'iod, that Man was form'd from out the Clay.

Homer,

Homer, *Callimachus*, that God is one,
And that all things proceed from him alone.
Maximus Tyr'ius strongly holds, that this
The uniform consent of Nations is.
That Honour which *Latines* and *Greeks* did shew
To the seventh Day (not here to name the Jew)
Which in unquestion'd Authors one observes,
The mem'ry of God's sev'n Days works preserves.
The *Celticks* this, and this the *Indian* speaks,
Who portion out the Seasons into Weeks,
And this the Names which they assign'd each day:
That Men at first liv'd in a simple way,
Their Manners rude, they naked to the Skin
Is ev'n in some *Egyptian* Writers seen.
Th'*Indians*, as *Strabo* shews, did celebrate
That Golden Age the Poets do relate:
Wild *Indians* did i'th'History agree,
Of *Adam*, *Eve*, the Serpent, and the Tree,
If to *Maimonides* we Credit give:
Nay, Witnesses who in our Age do live,
Affirm that *Indian Pagans* keep the same;
Their learned *Brachmans* mention *Adam*'s name.
Those at *Siam* reckon with us, the World
About the Poles six thousand Years has twirl'd:
That at the first Men liv'd a thousand years,
In the *Caldean* Registers appears:
Egyptians this, with some *Phœnicians* say;
Nor want there *Greeks* as positive as they.
And this may the more easy credit gain,
Because to after-ages did remain (shew
Vast Graves, which did the mouldred Bodies,
Compar'd with present, of a monstrous hew.
Pausanias and *Philostratus* of Greeks,
And this the Roman Nat'r'list, *Pliny*, speaks.
How God and Angels did with Man converse,
Till he provok'd their absence for a curse,

After

After the Greeks *Catullus* does relate,
And the old Giants truly ferine state,
With *Moses* Greeks and Latins do agree;
And in all Nations we some Proofs may see,
Of what about the Deluge he has shown:
All time to that old *Varro* call'd unknown.
Those things on which the Poets Fictions ground,
In other Writers are unblended found,
Agreeing with the Truth in *Moses* seen:
Berosus with the *Chaldees*, *Abidene*
Among th' *Assyrians*, did hold forth the same,
And the pacifick Dove the last does name:
This Grecian *Plutarch*, *Lucian* mentions this,
Who says, that *Syrian Hierapolis*,
Retain'd the Story of the Ark of old,
Which the sav'd race of Men and Beasts did hold:
In *Damascene* and *Melo* this you'l see,
The last does in the name of Ark agree:
Apollidorus does transmit to fame
Deucalion's Story, differing but in name:
And sev'ral *Spaniards* do at large attest,
That in *America* remotest West,
The mem'ry of the Flood they plainly trace,
And preservation of all Mortal Race:
The Raven forc'd to keep upon the Wing, *Gen.* 8. 7, 11.
And well-come Dove which th' Olive-branch did bring.
Where Men inhabited before the Flood
By *Joppe*, nam'd in *Pliny*'s understood:
And to this day Tradition does remain
Where th' Ark did rest, the Flood b'ing in again,
Mount *Ararat* on the *Armenian* Plain.
The Father of us *Europeans* here,
Japhet in *Ethnick* Authors does appear
Ion or *Javan* the learn'd Grecians own,
And *Hammon* Arts to th' *Africans* had shown,

Names

Names the Mosaick Writings have preserv'd:
Josephus too, and others have observ'd,
That many Names of Men and places shew,
Apparent Footsteps of what there we view.
Which of the Poets does not proof supply,
Of the condemn'd attempt to scale the Sky?
Clouds of Authorities confirm that Fire,
In which polluted *Sodom* did expire.
We might as many Witnesses produce,
To shew that Circumcision was in use,
And this continues among *Abram*'s Seed,
With *Ismaelites*, and *Idumean* breed:
The Hist'ry of the ancient Patriarchs too
In *Philo*'s *Sanchoniatho* we view;
In *Hecatæus* this, and *Damascene*,
Berosus and *Demetrius* may be seen;
Artap'nus, and *Eupol'mus* we may add:
This he who wrote the famous *Orphics* had.
Some part of this *Justin*'s learn'd Book affords,
Which from *Pompeius Trogus* he records;
Scarce one of them but tells of *Moses*'s fame,
How he was sav'd from water th'*Orphics* name,
And that two Tables he from God receiv'd,
And *Polemon* confirms what's here believ'd.
Sev'ral of the *Egyptian* Writers shew
How vainly *Pharoh*'s Hoast did *Israel*'s Flock pursue.
And who that thinks of *Moses* can believe,
That he should e're have ventur'd to deceive;
When with wise Enemies encompast round,
Who would have noted all the faults they found,
If former Authors what he wrote controul'd,
Or 'twere oppos'd by a Tradition old,
Or he of the then present times did tell,
What Witnesses then living could refel:

Sicilian Diodore, *Pliny* the young,
Longinus of ſublimity of Tongue,
Strabo, and *Tacitus*, of *Moſes* ſpeak;
Jamnis and *Mambris*, in their Sorceries weak,
When they his Credit to impair did ſeek,
The *Talmud*, *Pliny*, *Apuleius*, name:
Some Laws, and Ritu'als, which from *Moſes* came,
The golden *Pythagorean* Verſes ſhew,
And many of them you elſewhere may view.
Strabo and *Trogus* Teſtimonies give,
How juſt, how pious, the old Jews did live:
What we of *Joſhua*, and others find,
Early or late, to memory conſign'd,
Agreeing with the Jews, need not be join'd;
Since he who will to *Moſes* credit give,
Whom now it were a ſhame to disbelieve,
Muſt not deny, which here we ſought to prove,
That God in a mirac'lous way did move,
Exceeding all the Laws which Nature knew:
That he ſuch Acts in after-times did ſhew,
As when *Elijah*, and *Eliſha* liv'd,
Is with leſs heſitance to be receiv'd;
Becauſe the Jews were then become more known,
Their Rites held more in deteſtation,
The World then could not but have jealous Eyes,
And ſtop the growth of the moſt ſpeci'ous lies.
Hazöus and *Lycophrones* do tell
What in the ſwall'wing Whale *Jonas* befel,
Only the name for *Hercules* they change,
To whom they us'd t'impute things great, and ſtrange.
The truth of Hiſtory did *Julian* force, (morſe)
(Who ne're t'wards Jews or Chriſtians had re-
To own, that God did often Jews inſpire,
And burnt *Elijah*'s Sacrifice with Heav'nly Fire.

Add to this farther, that the Jewish Law
All vain pretence to Prophesy did awe;
It did Obedience to their Kings perswade,
Yet they that sacred Office fear'd t'invade:
Esdras, and others wiser than the rest,
That they were less than Prophets still confest;
This gift some Ages before *Jesus* ceast.
But who on many millions could impose
With Prodigies they did to all expose,
Such as the High-priest's Breast-plate did disclose?
That Light and Truth which thence shone forth to all,
Continu'd fresh till the first Temple's fall;
In this such certain Faith have all the Jews,
As that 'twas known to their Fore-fathers, shews.

XVI. *The same is proved by Predictions.*

To this of Miracles, we may subjoyn
Another proof of Providence Divine,
The knowledg of Contingencies to come,
Which was imparted from above, to some;
When not one cause, or sign could then appear,
To them their Times and Tendencies were clear,
(a) Jos. 6. 26. & 1 Kings 16. 34. As th'Orbity of him who should restore
Jerico curst by (a) *Joshua* long before.
(b) 1 King. 13. 2. & 2 Kings 23. 15. Who should the Temple on Mount (b) *Bethel* fire,
More than three hundred years e're 'twas t'expire:
(c) Esa. 44. 28. & 45. 1. *Esaiah* too (c) *Cyrus* the great does name,
And his chief Actions since made known to fame.
(d) Jer. 37. 11. *Jerusalem* from (d) *Caldean* force being freed,
(e) ib. 8. *Jeremy* saw that they should yet (e) succeed,
(f) Dan. 2. 32. & 39. 7, 5. & 8. 3, 20. The fate of the Assyrian Monarchy,
Daniel (f) did in the womb of Time descry,
That first to *Medes* and *Persians* it should fall,
(g.) Dan. 10. 20. & 11. 2, 3. Then (g) *Alexander* should ingross it all.
Seleucus then, and *Ptolomy* (h) part divide,
(h) Dan. 8. 9, &c. What mischief should from these, the (i) *Jews*, be-
(i) ib. tide,

But

But chiefly from (k) *Anti'ochus* the Renown'd: (k) Dan. 8. 23, 24.
The truth of these when searching *Porphry* found,
To this poor subterfuge he driven was,
That they were wrote after they came to pass.
But we as well a warm dispute may raise,
Who wrote the Books whence *Virgil* has his Praise;
The *Romans* knew not that by surer fame,
Than had the Jews for what bore *Daniel*'s name.
Did not oracular Predictions shew,
What *Mexico* should feel, and rich *Peru*,
Which the relentless *Spaniards* should subdue?
To this those many Dreams we may refer,
Which to Events full Correspondence bear,
Events which they who dream't could ne're fore-know,
From any thing observable below:
These to ascribe unto some casual hit,
Or nat'ral cause, can't thinking Men befit:
Of these *Tertulli'an*, writing of the Soul,
Brings many Instances beyound controul.
Of Sp'irits assuming vehicles of Air,
Which Men not only did discern, but hear,
Authors by no means credulous declare.
Such Spectres in *America* have been,
In *Mexico*, and *Sina*, often seen.
And those fire-*Ord'eals* with old *Germans* known,
As in their Histories, and Laws are known,
Prove an Almighty Power the just does own.

XVII. *The Objection that Miracles are not now seen, answered.*

If less exertions of the Power Divine,
For *Miracles*, and *Prophecies* now shine;
The force of what is prov'd it can't impair;
Since 'tis enough, that once such things there were:

If they have been less frequent than before,
God in great Wisdom these his Works forbore:
Nor is it fit to violate the Laws
Printed on Nature, but for weighty cause;
As when the Jews in a small Corner clos'd,
Were to maintain a Worship all expos'd;
Or that the Truths in Christian Doctrine found,
Were to enlighten all the World around:
Such times are well becoming God to show
That Nature's but his Hand-maid here below.

XVIII. *And Wickedness obtains such licence.*

Some question whether Providence presides,
Seeing how Sin flows in with mighty Tides,
As if 'twould deluge all the World again;
Which Providence, if any, should restrain.
But th'answer's easy, since Man's Will is free,
And God alone good by necessity:
To bridle and keep in our Sins by force,
Were to make Man no better than an Horse.
Bate, that of freedom we are not bereft,
No proper means are unattempted left:
A Law is made our wild Desires to chain,
And none for want of Knowledg can complain;
Inward and outward Admonition's joyn'd
And Threats and Promises to bend the Mind:
That very Wickedness that's suffer'd here,
Has limits set by God's o're-ruling Care;
In vain it strives to swell beyond its bound,
To force th'enclosures of the sacred Ground.
His Church, hem'd in with the tempestuous deep,
His Pow'r does from an Inundation keep:
Civil Societies his Influ'ence share,
Else the mad Multitnde no Laws would bear:
And ev'n that Mischief, which does license get,
Has some good end by his appointment set;

To

To punish, or correct, those Souls that stray
Out of the Paths of Vertue's narrow way;
Or else a glorious Specimen to give,
How nobly the Adult in Vertue strive.
'Gainst those Temptations which in Crouds ar-rive!
While Patience does its perfect work maintain,
And constancy unto the last remain.
And they, whose Punishment has been delay'd,
For this forbearance have large int'rest pay'd;
Thus they who disobey'd th'Almighty's Will,
Against their own, his purposes fulfil.

XIX. *That the Just are often oppress.*

If Wickedness unpunish'd long appear,
The weak still suffer'd Violence to bear,
In sorrow long to draw their hated Breath,
And die at last an ignominious Death;
As if their Innocence had no regard:
Man is not therefore from God's Care debarr'd;
For no Man knows how God exerts his Pow'r,
In inward Blessings, th'ill can ne're devour:
Besides, before was prov'd an Aid Divine;
Wherefore we with the wise in the belief should joyn,
That since God knows our Actions, and is just;
Yet sometimes seems to authorize distrust;
A future Judgment needs must be behind,
Where Sinners their due Punishment may find,
And all egregious Vertue, here unblest,
Exalted to a state above the rest;
May meet full Recompence for all its Pain.
For this we must believe, that Souls remain,
When loosned from the Body's cumbrous Chains
And this belief so general is known,
That we it's rise must from first Parents own:

XX. *This Argument is retorted to prove that Souls survive the Bodies.*

XXI. *Which is confirmed by Tradition.*

This *Homer* ſings in Verſes ever new,
And this the *Gauls*, as well as *Grecians* knew;
Their learned *Druids* this moſt fully taught,
And this the *Brachmans* with the *Indians* thought:
Ægyptian, *Thracian*, *German* Sages, all,
Upon this Truth with one conſent do fall;
For proof we might unqueſtion'd Authors call;
In *Strabo*, *Plutarch*, and *Laertius*, ſee
How the *Ægyptians*, *Indians* too, agree,
In the expecting of the Day of Doom,
After this Life is to its period come:
Hiſtaſpes, and the ancient *Sybills* ſpake,
What Conflagrati'ons ſhall the World o're-take;
Ovid and *Lucan*, both this thought purſue,
This at *Siam* the ſavage *Ind'ians* knew;
Of this Aſtronomers a Proof have found,
In that the Sun draws nigher to the ground.
Parts fartheſt off at firſt diſcov'ry prove,
That we can no where from theſe Truths remove;
Canaries yield this Fruit, the Weſtern Shoar
Largely enriches with this Golden Oar.

XXII. *Nothing in Reaſon againſt it.*

Nor can one Argument in Nature found,
This old Tradition, ſo extenſive, wound:
For if we any thing obſerve to fail,
'Tis either, that what's mighti'er does prevail,
In its own Nature contrary to that,
As Cold does through the force of Heat abate;
Or the removing that in which it ſtands;
As when a Glaſs is fallen from our hands,
And into ſeveral little peices broke,
The form is periſht which at firſt it took:
Or elſe 'twas from deficience in the cauſe;
As Light does vaniſh when the Sun withdraws:

But

But none of these can of the Soul be said;
For nothing contrary to that was made;
In this does its peculiar b'eing delight,
Things to each other the most opposite,
At once it's intellectu'al Pow'r receives.
This for the first: The second who believes?
For on what Subject can the Soul depend?
If we for this the Body should commend;
How happens it that when the Body's tyr'd,
The Soul to farther Action still is fir'd,
Without least lascitude from thence acquir'd?
An Object also that too much excels,
All the weak forces of the Body quels;
And thus the feeble Organs of our sight,
Cannot endure the Sun's prevailing Light;
The nobler Objects entertain the Mind,
Its force is stronger, Pleasure more refin'd;
As when its Thoughts from matter it abstracts,
And about lofty Universals acts;
The Body's forces cannot but embrace (place;
Things, which are circumscrib'd by time and
For that's the Body's Nature, while the Mind
To what's eternal, and immense, is joyn'd:
Since then the Body don't its Acti'ons give,
It's Essence how can it from thence receive?
The Natures of the things we ne're discern,
We can but by their Operations learn.
Nor more to this can we ascribe the way
Mention'd the last, as reason of decay;
For no efficient cause we can invent,
Which failing, all the reasoning Pow'r is spent:
For this the Parents you can ne're assign;
For then their Deaths would cut off all their
No other cause 'tis possible to name, (Line:
Than th'universal, whence at first things came,

Whoſe Pow'r we're ſure can no defici'ence know;
But that his Will's deficient, who can ſhow?
That 'tis the pleaſure of the Deity
Souls ſhould in total Abolition lie?

XXIII. *Many Reaſons make for it.*

Nay th'Arguments o'th'other ſide are clear:
That Man o're his own Actions pow'r does bear,
And all the an'imal World his beck obeys;
That he his Mind to God's own Throne can raiſe,
And for his ſake contemn all outward things:
That in his Soul a grateful thirſt there ſprings
Of an immortal State above the Earth,
And he diverts himſelf with ſolid Mirth,
While a good Conſci'ence does ſupply the Feaſt,
With which he in each Circumſtance is bleſt:
This comforts him to bear the heavi'eſt ſtroke;
Nor can the anchor of his hope be broke:
But then if he a wicked Life has led,
What gaſtly Horrors all his Thoughts o're-ſpread!
Death is the King of Terrors truly found,
And the laſt Judgment inwardly does wound;
Under the force of which great Tyrants groan,
And hardly dare they truſt themſelves alone:
Examples are too numerous to give,
Of thoſe, who under theſe Tormentors live.

XXIV. *Whence it follows that the end of Man ſhould be Happneſs after this Life.*

But if ſuch be the nature of the Mind,
That of it's failing we no cauſe can find:
And God has pleas'd to give us many ſigns,
That when the Body moulders, that ſtill ſhines:
What nobler end can mortal Man propound,
Than that with Happ'ineſs this may be crown'd?
Hence *Plato*, and the *Pythagoreans* taught;
Man ſhould to imitate his God be brought:

What

What that Felicity, and how attain'd,
May in some part by humans thought be gain'd;
But what God has discover'd in his Word,
Must most of Truth, and Certainty afford;
Which since the Christian Doctrine does hold
Let us examine what belief 'tis worth. (forth,

XXV. *Which to obtain, Men must search for the true Religion.*

LIB. II.

THou, blessed Jesus! who in Heav'n dost reign,
Assist my Thoughts, while in an humble strain,
The Truth, and Certainty, I represent,
Of that Religion, for which thou wast sent!

I. *To prove the Truth of Christian Religion.*

That while *Tiber'ius* did the Empire sway,
Jesus of *Naz'areth* did in *Judah* stay,
Not Christians only constantly profess,
Jewish, and *Pagan* Authors, do no less:
Sueton'ius, *Pliny*, *Tac'itus*, have his Fame,
And numbers after them repeat the same:
And that this *Jesus*, *Pilate* crucify'd,
Howe're reproachful, Christians ne're deny'd:
Nay this the *Jews* ne're scruple to declare,
Tho great, on that account, their Suff'rings are,
Where e're dispersit they among Christians live.
And Proofs beyond desire the *Pagans* give;
Who *Pilate*'s Acts have down to us convey'd,
In whose Memorials this as chief is laid.
Julian, and others, who the most oppose
That rule of Life, which blessed *Jesus* shows,

II. *Here is shewn that Jesus liv'd.*

Con-

Concerning this did ne're one Question move:
This the most disagreeing People prove;
The Proofs so full, no History has more.

III. Yet him most distant Realms as God adore.
Nevertheless was after his Death worshipp'd by Men of the greatest Wisdom.
And this appears not in our Age alone,
But we may trace it back unto his own:
And when at *Rome* fierce *Nero* did preside,
Many for that Profession bravely dy'd,
As *Tacitus*, and sev'ral others tell.

IV. And of these Worsh'ppers, many did excel
In Judgment and improvements of the Mind
(Not here to name whom of the Jews we find)
Such *Serg'ius* was who did in *Cyprus* rule,
And *Dionysius*, Head of a fam'd School;
That glorious ancient Martyr *Polycarp*,
Justin, and *Irenæus*, Writers sharp;
Wise *Athenagoras* at *Athens* bred,
And *Origin*, whose Learning far has spread,
With *Alexandrian Clement* many more,
Unto this suffering Lord like Rev'rence bore.
What with such thinking Men as these could sway,
Most of them bred in quite another way,
On such an Object of their Faith to call,
Of which there could be no other cause, than that he wrought Miracles.
Where neither Honour could, or Gain befal?
Were it not this, that having us'd the care,
In things which of the chiefest moment are,
Fit for the wise, trying the constant fame,
Which did his supernat'ral Works proclaim;
They found them such, beyond the least dispute,
As did all vain Philosophy confute:
Diseases quitting the long ravag'd Field,
When nothing in all Nature help could yeild:
Sight giv'n to him who ne're could use an Eye;
That questionless miraculous supply

Of thousands, with created Loaves of Bread,
Repeated, and thro' distant Regions spread;
And Life call'd back again after 'twas fled.

V.
Which Miracles cannot be ascribed to Natural or Diabolical Efficacy, but proceeded merly from God.

Not here the numerous instances to name,
Which had obtain'd such an unblemish Fame,
That *Celsus*, and ev'n *Julian*, them confess,
And the learn'd *Jewish Talmudists* no less:
These they ne're scrupl'd Prodigies to call,
And therein own them supernatural.
Long fixt Diseases yelding at command
Of the least motion of the Lip, or Hand,
Argue a Pow'r which Nature must obey:
But if in this such Efficacy lay;
It no less strange appears, that of all those,
Who Christ, and his Religion, did oppose,
None should the mighty Secret yet disclose.
And hence we with just reas'ning may collect,
That of Imposture none can these suspect;
Since they were publick, and expos'd to sight
Of Men, who 'gainst Conviction us'd to fight,
And Men well conversant in ev'ry Art
That nat'ral Wit, or Study could impart.
And the like things repeated as was need,
Shew'd that these Works did not from chance proceed.
Besides th' effects were such as long did last;
When things by accident are quickly past.
These things with due Consideration weigh'd,
'Gainst which the Jews have no Objections made,
Their Force from foreseeing more than humane
Which either a good Spirit was, or bad: (had;
The bad would never these great Truths attest,
By which their Empire here is so depress,
And which prohibit their beloved Feast,

Deeds,

Deeds, and Desires obscene; Experience shows,
That *Demons* all their Pomp and Worship lose,
Magick, and all their other Arts held vain,
Where e're Christ'anity does footing gain:
Porphiry owns, Christ's Advent did impair
The Forces of those Princes of the Air.
Who can think Evil Spirits so unwise,
Where there no Honour or Advantage lies,
But great Disgrace and Detriment t'ensue,
Yet the same Acti'ons still they should pursue?
Less is it to be thought it should agree
With the known Wisdom of the Deity,
And that extensive Goodness all Men see,
To suffer Men, guilty of nothing ill,
Devoted absolutely to his Will,
Such as all grant the Prim'tive Christ'ians were,
To be trapan'd into a fatal Snare;
Men in their Lives unblam'd, and suff'ring pain,
That they a faultless Conscience might maintain.
But if you say these Deeds must be assign'd
Unto some good, but secondary Mind;
Therein that they the Godhead pleas'd you own;
For all good Spirits look at that alone.
Not here those wondrous Works of *Christ* to
name,
Which no less Author than a God proclaim;
As with new Life informing Breathless Clay:
And who, besides, can of th'Amighty say,
He does, or suffers Wonders without cause?
For no wise Maker of well-founded Laws,
Would without weighty Reason make them
vain:
But then who can another Reason feign,
Than what our Saviour did himself declare?
That God thereby did Testimony bear

Unto

Unto those sacred Doctrines which he taught.
By those that saw them what else could be thought?
They being such as we observ'd before,
As 'twere a scandal to the God w'adore,
And impious to believe, he would impose
On Men so perfectly resign'd as those.
This was the cause why many of the Jews,
Who *Moses* for their constant Guide did chuse,
About that time when *Jesus* here did move,
Receiv'd him as a Master from above,
Such were the *Nazarens* and *Ebio'nites*,
Zealous Asserters of the *Jewish* Rites.

VI. *Christ's Resurrection prov'd by credible Testimonies.*

Christ's Miracles like Confirmation have,
From his return to Life out of the Grave:
This has not only been for Truth receiv'd,
But a chief Article to be believ'd
By all who e're Christianity profest.
But it for certain needs must be confest,
All could not this matter of Faith have thought,
Unless the Men, who first *Christ*'s Doctrine taught,
Had full perswasion in their Hearers wrought;
But, evidently, this could ne're have been,
Without asserting what themselves had seen:
None moderately wise, would e're have chose
A Faith, which to such Dangers did expose,
Unless they had affirm'd it's Truth, who saw
This great Foundation of the Christian Law:
But that it always was affirm'd, is shown
By other Writings, fully as their own.
And, as in Books as clearly 'tis reveal'd,
They to five hundred Witnesses appeal'd,
Who saw our Saviour come to Life again,
But how durst any so appeal that feign?

And who could on such Multitudes prevail,
To cheat the World with a factitious Tale?
Nay were the Twelve all who had this maintain'd,
They were enow full Credit to have gain'd;
For no Man would for nothing be a Knave.
Honours 'tis sure thereby they could not have;
For those were at the absolute dispose
Of *Jews* and *Heathens*, who did them oppose:
Nor could they have by this encreast their store,
Thro' it they lost what they had gain'd before:
Nor could one benefit of Life, invite
To cheat the World with any cunning slight:
Their very preaching, as full well they knew,
To Labours, Hunger, Thirst, and Prisons drew:
Then Fame with their own Sect could never tempt
Plain Men, from all degrees of Pride exempt,
So many Inconveniencies to bear,
For the thin diet of that pop'ular Air;
Nor could they hope that Doctrine would succeed,
With Nature, still intent upon it's need,
When all Authority on Earth oppos'd;
But as they with God's sacred Promise clos'd.
This may be added; that whatever Fame
They might propound, by preaching up *Christ*'s Name,
They had no expectation it could last,
For, so with Clouds God's Purpose was o're-cast,
They thought the World did to it's Period hast,
Which is in theirs, and other Writings plain.
The sole Objection which can yet remain,
Is that they ly'd for their Religion's sake:
Which no Man, that had duly weigh'd, would make;

For either their Religion true they thought,
Or, what they knew to be a Falshood, taught:
But had they not believ'd it to be best,
They would not have forsaken all the rest,
Among which Safety lay and Honour too,
Nor had profest it, barely as 'twas true,
Unless they that Profession needful knew:
For nothing else could free them from the Guilt,
Of all the Blood through that Profess'on spilt:
But if they that believ'd, not true alone,
But best, and neces'ry for them to own,
After the Founders Death to be receiv'd;
This could not have obtain'd, had he deceiv'd,
Declaring his own rising from the Dead:
No Men whose Understandings were not fled,
Finding their Expectations frustrate there,
Would to that Faith still holy Rev'rence bear.
Then all Religions, chiefly *Christ*'s, deny
To blemish sacred things with any Lie:
Religion therefore, such an one before,
Could never this officious Lie procure.
The Men besides were such, as their worst Foes
For nothing but simplicity expose:
Nor had, such, Wit enough so well to feign,
And who would do it for the sake of pain?
Which that Profession certainly would gain:
I'th'utmost Tortures Malice could invent,
Many for this out of the World were sent:
How much soever some might chuse to bear,
For an Opinion which they valu'd dear;
Who can imagine Men with Sense indu'd,
Not one alone, but a great multitude,
Should make themselves subject to certain Woe,
For what themselves had known to be untrue?

But then their Lives, and Writings which they left,
Shew that they were not of their Wits bereft.
What may confirm the Evidence of those,
Who the first Witnesses for *Christ* arose,
Serves for St. *Paul* as much, who did declare,
That rapt above the Regions of the Air,
Whether with strengthned Rays of mortal sight,
Or meerly by an intellectu'al Light,
The Soul being sep'rate from the Body's Chain,
He saw where Christ does with his Father reign.
All that the Jews could teach, he had acquir'd,
Nor greater honour need to have desir'd,
Than what he might expect in his old way:
When on the other side, for this, he lay
Expos'd to th'utmost hatred of his Friends,
Nature depriv'd of all its darling ends,
Travels, and Labours all his worldly Meed,
And a reproachful death was to succeed.

VII. *Answer to the Objection, that Christ's Resurrection seems impossible.*

VVho can assent to proofs, so clear delay;
Unless that 'tis impossible he say,
That is a contradiction does imply?
Which we of this may with good grounds deny.
At the same time to be alive, and dead,
VVere contradicti'ous: but when life is fled,
Back by the Pow'r that gave it to be brought,
Can never sure impossible be thought:
As *Plato* writes, to *Eris* this befell:
Heracl'des this does of a VVoman tell:
Of one *Herodotus* does this relate:
And this, says *Plutarch*, was anothers fate:
VVhich shews that VVise-men thought that it might be;
If, that 'twas possible, we then agree,
For Christ to breath again with living breath,
After its be'ng extinguisht once in death;

And

And that 'twas so in fact's so fully prov'd,
That it the Jewish Rabbi *Becai* mov'd:
But as his Followers, and others, shew,
He held forth to the World a Doctrine new;
This must by needful Consequence be true,
Since he maintain'd 'twas by divine Command;
For with God's Justice it can no way stand,
Or Goodness either, to exalt so high
One, who in so momentous things would lie:
Had he been such an one, who would believe
That he the certain notice should receive
Both when, and how, he should from Life retire,
And have his Reins new fill'd with active Fire,
Himself declaring that all this was wrought,
For Confirmat'ion of the Truths he taught?

That his Resurrection evinces the Truth of his Doctrine.

These Arguments do from the Fact arise.
Let's come to what within the Doctrine lies:
He who believes, that God did all things make,
And care of his own Workmanship does take;
And thinks withal, how great is Humane Mind;
Unto what noble purposes design'd!
To be acquir'd by freedom of the Will,
In chusing either Moral Good, or Ill,
To close with the Rewards which so invite,
Or take the Penalties in endless Night,
Can't think all Worship should aside be laid,
Or that refuse which *Jesus* does perswade.
Not only this the Evidence of Fact,
Intrinsick Motives strongly this exact;
For no Religion ever yet arose,
Which did so excellent Rewards propose,
Or such a perfect Rule of Life did lay,
Or went on in so wonderful a way.

VIII. *That the Christian Religion excels all others.*

IX. *For the Excellency of the Reward propounded.*

Here to begin with the Reward, the end,
Which in their Act'ions Men do first intend,
Tho in the execution last 'tis seen:
Those Institut'ions *Moses* did bring in,
If we the Letter of the Law regard,
Beyond this Life did promise no Reward;
Rich Soil, a plentiful encrease of Store,
Conquest o're all that Arms against them bore,
A vigorous old Age, and prospect clear
Of Issue long the taintless Name to bear,
Were all that did, without thick Clouds appear.
From which the Wise alone themselves had wrought,
Through a long chain of recollective thought.
Hence *Moses* tho the Sadduces receiv'd,
They nothing of a future state believ'd:
The wisest Grecians, who their Learning drew
From all *Caldeans*, or *Ægyptians*, knew,
Conceiv'd some hopes of Life when this were out;
Yet still 'twas mingled with o're-shad'wing doubt.
In the *Socratick* Writings thus 'tis found;
Nor do the Latins less with doubts abound:
Of *Tully* this, and *Seneca* may be said;
When to the Truth their Arguments have led,
They seem'd afraid with their own thoughts to close,
Which on so fallible a ground arose,
That 'twould with Beasts as well as Men agree,
The consequence of which when some did see,
A Transmigration they of Souls did feign,
From Men to Beasts, from Beasts to Men again:
Nothing like Proof did o're this recommend;
Yet it be'ng evident Man has some end;
Some thought that Vertue was its own reward,
In Instances most perilous and hard;

That

That that alone gives pleasure to the full,
The Wise be'ing happy in the burning Bull:
But most Men saw thro this so thin pretence,
A form of words against apparent sense;
As if the height of happiness could lye,
In dangers, Nature robb'd of all supply,
Faintings, and dissolutions at the last,
After a life in wasting torments past.
Others, who law the vanity of this,
In gratifying Sense plac'd all their bliss:
But this the nature of Mankind depress,
And humbled Man to the degree of Beast,
Extinguishing those gen'rous inbred Seeds,
Which carry him erect to noble Deeds.
In such incertainties Men groapt about,
Till Christ in Charity remov'd the doubt;
The perfect knowledg of Man's end he taught,
Life without death, or pain, and happy beyond
thought;
And this not only for that part of Man,
For which some Ages a Conjecture ran,
If not Tradit'ion, that it should remain,
After the be'ng unloos'ned from its Chain;
But that God would our Bodies spiritu'alize,
That they may to a joynt Communion rise;
And this with mighty Equity, since they,
As they the Sancti'ons of God's Laws obey,
Are often forc'd to bear with dol'rous Pain,
And Death at last, for all their Labour gain;
Wherefore some Compensation should remain:
Nor are the promis'd Joys so grosly low,
As were the chiefest some dull Jews did know,
Perpetu'al Feasts, or that the more refin'd,
Restless Society with Woman-kind,
That powerful Lure sly *Mahomet* design'd:

These are peculiar to a Mortal State,
To cherish Life, or else to propagate.
Vigour in Bodies never to abate,
Beauty beyond what in the Stars does shine,
Knowledg of God, and Providence Divine,
A mind with steady light, without one cloud
Of baleful Error, or reserve to shroud,
Perfect tranquillity of settled wills,
While God himself the Soul with Raptures fills,
Th' extatick Soul wholly imployd in Praise,
And admiration which no time decays;
This is the happiness, which Christ declares,
Which he much undervalues that compares.

X. *Answer to the objection, That Bodies once dissolved, cannot be restored.*

Some urge a difficulty yet unsolv'd,
How Bodies should, after their being dissolv'd,
Have all their scatt'red Particles agen,
And make the self-same individual Men.
But by their search Philosophers can tell,
That what ere changes have in things befel,
The matter of them still continues fit
Of sev'ral different *Species* to admit.
How far soever they may be disjoind,
Th' Almighty can their Receptacles find,
And into the same mass together bind.
Things of like kind the Chymists can unite,
Of him who made the World shall we deny't?
If into Nature's common works we look,
We find where things have diff'rent *species* took,
To the first form they oft again return;
As we by sev'ral sorts of Seeds discern.
Nor yet a Knot more difficult t' unty,
In human Bodies eat by Beasts does lie,
And they again for Men becoming food,
This may concerning them be understood;

Of

Of what we eat 'tis but a little part,
Which Nature to our Subſtance does convert,
Moſt, Excrement, or ſuch acceſſion, proves,
As Phlegm, or Choler, which with eaſe removes;
Diſeaſes, inward Heat, and outward Air,
Much, ev'n of that which nouriſhes, impair:
Which being ſo; what ſhould our God impede,
Who of mute Creatures ſtill preſerves the breed,
Of human Bodies ſo much care to take,
That what of theirs does food for others make,
No more of added ſubſtance, ſhould produce,
Than Poiſon, or the Med'cines which we uſe?
And this the rather, ſince we plainly ſee,
Man's Fleſh by Nature don't for Food agree.
But yet for once, let us admit it were,
And part of th'laſt muſt to the firſt repair,
To conſtitute the Man which was before;
Yet this Objection does not preſs the more;
For the ſame Perſon it may well be thought,
Tho back to th'firſt ſome Particles are brought;
No leſs Mutati'ons ev'n in Life are wrought.
In Worms we may diſcover little Flies,
In Plants, and Wine, a ſecret Virtue lies,
Which the ſame ſubſtance after waſte ſupplies.
Of the like kind we might name many more,
And ſhall we think the God whom we adore,
Can't make a Body, tho diſſolv'd, the ſame?
Men we are are ſure, for Learning great in Fame,
Not only this as poſſible receiv'd;
But that 'twould be in future times believ'd.
This did *Caldean Zoroaſter* own,
And ſcarce one *Stoick* was againſt it known;
Peripatetick *Theopompus* too,
In his Reſearches did this thought purſue.

XI. *The ſingular Sanctity of the Rules concerning God's Worſhip.*

The ſecond Proof, that Chriſt's Religion's beſt,
Is in the holy Rules it gives, expreſt:
All others that have been, or can be fram'd,
Compar'd with this, deſerve to be diſclaim'd,
Both for the Worſhip of the Deity,
And every Office which in Life does lie.
The Cruelty of the old *Pagan* Rites,
Is fully ſeen, in what their *Porph'ry* writes:
And where e're late diſcov'ries any find,
They 'ppear to be unworthy of Mankind.
In almoſt ev'ry place a Notion ran,
That God's were pacify'd by Blood of Man,
Nor *Grecian* Learning, nor the *Roman* Law,
Did it's Authority from this withdraw:
The bloody *Bacchanali'ans* this may prove,
And the warm Sacrifice to *Lati'al Jove*,
Their Cere'al Myſteries, moſt ſacred held,
With all ſorts of Obſcenities were fill'd;
As was moſt viſible to ev'ry ſight,
When their *Arcana* were expos'd to Light:
Clement of *Alexandr'ia* this does blame,
With other Authors of undoubted Fame:
Grave *Cato* was aſham'd of thoſe lew'd Plays,
With which they kept their Conſecrated Days.
But the Religion of the Jews, indeed,
Allow'd no wicked or diſhoneſt Deed;
Yet loads of Ceremonies it enjoyn'd,
That People, to Idolatry inclin'd,
By no means tending to improve the Mind;
Meerely their own Will-worſhip to reſtrain;
Hence were the Beaſts in Sacrifices ſlain:
Their painful circumciſing the Foreskin:
And counting Work on the ſeventh day a Sin,
With the prohibiting ſome ſorts of Meat:
When cunning *Mahomet* ſet up his Cheat;

This

This was a Pattern unto his design:
A Law he added to abstain from Wine.
But that Religion which to Christ we owe,
Does how we should the Godhead worship, show;
That we must offer to the purest Mind,
What is, as much as may be, of the kind, (quires;
And Works good in themselves: whence he re-
Not Circumcision of the Flesh, but of Desires:
Our Hands from ev'ry Work not to withdraw;
But what is contr'ary to th'justest Law:
Not for our Sins with Blood of Beasts t'atone,
But, if the Truth require, to yeild our own.
To think our God himself has Debtor made,
For whatsoe're to help the poor is paid:
Not to abstain from certain kinds of Meat,
But with fit Moderati'on any eat,
Such as we find unto our Health is due:
Sometimes with Fasts the Body to subdue,
That it may be more subject to the Mind,
To the pursuit of things sublime, enclin'd.
But the chief Proof of our Religion's shown,
To lie in pious Trust of God alone,
Thro' which devoted wholly to his Will,
We wait when he'l his purposes fulfil,
With certain Faith, a pledg of future things,
Whence lively Hope with solid Pleasure springs,
With an exalted Love, sincerely true,
Not only of our God, but Neighbour too:
Hence we obey not out of servile fear,
But that we him may please whom we revere,
Looking that as his Sons he'l us regard,
And with Paternal Blessings at the last reward.
We're farther taught, unto our God to pray,
Not for that Wealth, which must in time decay,

Honours, or other things, too often found
To Men's chief Infelicity t'abound:
In the first place God's Glory to desire,
But of these perishing things what Nature does
However trusting Providence Divine, (require;
To which we should wholly our selves resign.
But then to think no Labour is too great,
In foll'wing what tends to th'immortal State,
Pardon of Sins, and God's assisting Grace,
That thro' all hazards we may Truth embrace.
This Worship Christ in his Religi'on taught,
Than which none can of God be worthier thought.

XII. *Concerning those Offices of Humanity which we owe our Neighbour, tho he has injur'd us.*

And, suitable to this, you that will find,
Which with relati'on unto Man's enjoyn'd.
Mahomet's way, brought forth, and spread by
Breaths nothing else but terrible Alarms: (Arms,
So the *Laconic*, which the Greeks commend,
And th'Oracle approv'd, to this does tend;
Which *Aristotle* both observes, and blaims;
Yet War against *Barbari'ans* just proclaims,
As if 'twere nat'ral; when o'th'other side,
By Nature we to Friendship's Laws are ty'd:
What more unequal than when Skin for Skin
Is pay'd, where ever civil Rule has bin; (in,
When Slaughter takes whole bleeding Nations
Such Acts as glor'ious Men are proud to own,
And hence their Heads triumphant Lawrels crown.
War, oft unjust, procur'd the mighty Name
To *Rome*, that City flatter'd so by Fame:
What but their Glory, and unweildy Might,
Made them 'gainst *Cyprus*, and *Sardin'ia* fight?
In gen'ral, as the best Historians write,
No Nati'ons look'd on robbing as a fault,
When from beyond their Confines Spoils were
brought: That

That to revenge a Wrong a Vertue was,
Did with the *Stagyrist*, and *Tully*, pass.
The *Gladiators* mutilating Fights
The *Pagans* us'd in publick, for Delights;
And their own Children Men did oft expose.
That Discipline, with which the Jews do close,
Better, and much more holy does appear;
Yet, even that, with many things does bear,
Or rather grants, which give their Passions force;
As using 'gainst sev'n Cities no remorse,
With which their licence, howe're not content,
They think't of all who differ from them meant;
And hence they hate all Men of other ways;
The *Jew* now curses *Christ'ians* when he prays:
Their Law allow'd to make Returns of Pain;
An Hom'cide might b'a private hand be slain,
When to the dead th'Avenger was of kin;
But such return Christ's Law has made a Sin:
Nor should we in our Actions imitate,
What shewn in others we most justly hate:
In the first place to help the good w'are taught,
And like our God, to benefit the naught,
God who has giv'n in common to Mankind,
The Sun, the starry Host, Air, Shours and Wind.

XIII. *Of the Conjunction of Man and Woman.*

Nothing does more the care of Laws befit,
Than th' union which does the two Sexes knit:
No wonder that the Pagans this did slight;
Since of th'Adulteries, and Rapes they Write,
In which the Gods they worship'd did delight:
Nay by th' example of the Gods they prove,
That Male with Male may do the Act of Love:
For this cause with the Gods have been enroll'd
Antin'ous latest, *Ganymed* of old.

This

This with *Mahometans* is usu'al known;
Sineſes, others too, for lawful own.
Grec'ian Philoſophers much Art do uſe,
Under an honeſt name that Vice t'excuſe,
And theſe whole Cities render'd common ſtews,
While they Commuuity of Women prais'd;
When yet indulgent Nature ſeems t'have rais'd
A conjugal Affection, ev'n with Brutes:
How much more equal is't, t'avoid Diſputes,
That the more holy Creature, Man, proceed,
From an united Love, and unmixt Seed?
Leſt all Paternal Care, and Filial Love,
But empty uſeleſs names on Earth ſhould prove.
The Jewiſh Law to check Uncleanneſs ſtrives;
But yet too plainly yeilds one many Wives,
And, for ſmall cauſes, gives the Husband leave
To be divorc'd from one he did receive:
This at this day *Mahometans* maintain,
Among the Greeks, and Latines, did ſo reign,
That the *Lacon'ians* would let out their Wives,
And this reproach, ev'n *Cato's* Fame ſurvives.
But by that perfect Law Chriſt did perſwade,
The Ax unto the very Root is laid.
Who does a Woman's Chaſtity invade,
Or but commits with a laſcivious Eye,
Can by no means the Imputation fly,
Before the great Diſcerner of the Mind,
Who, as 'twas done, judges what was deſign'd:
And, ſince true Friendſhip does in Union lie,
Body, as well as Soul, to one would tie.
And this is much more profitable known,
For bringing up the Children which we own.
Few *Ethnicks* were contented with one Wife:
The *Romans*, thus, and *Germans*, led their Life,

The Christi'ans thus; that as the Wive's desire
Is giv'n the Man, she should have his entire;
And the affairs at home may well proceed;
While diff'rent Mistresses would discord breed.

XIV. *Touching the use of all Temporal Goods.*

To come to th' use of things which pass for good;
Some Ethnicks Theft, as crim'nal, n'ere withstood:
For this *Egyptians*, *Spartans*, licence had;
Romans this, but in private men, forbad;
The chiefest business of the Publick 'twas;
Which made their Orator that Sarcasm pass,
That if they should to all their own restore;
They'd live in Cottages, as heretofore.
Against this was the Jewish Law severe;
Yet did with Usury to Strangers bear:
Thus it to suit their *Geniuses* did strain,
Who valu'd their Religion by their Gain.
Christ did Injustice totally restrain;
Without enquiring who the persons were:
And for frail things forbad all carking care;
Our minds being unfit for two desires,
Either of which all of the Man requires,
Each of them prompting him in sev'ral ways.
Those cares, which Riches keep, as well as raise,
Bring so much servitude, and constant pain,
As steals away the pleasure of the gain,
While little cost and diligence, acquires,
Those few, and easie things, Nature desires;
And if indulgent Heav'n affords us more,
We need not throw away an useless store,
As some Philosophers have done before;
Nor without profit it at home retain,
Or lay it out in things profusely vain:

But

But we are taught it nobly to apply,
While we the wants of those that need supply,
Giving, or lending, as those well becomes,
Who know they are but Stewards of their Sums,
Plac'd in their hands by God, but to dispence,
Yet they true Treasures may obtain from thence;
What's well laid out, God takes as to him paid,
And makes returns which nothing can invade.
Hence Liberality, next to divine,
Did in the practice of first *Christ'ans* shine,
The farthest parts of *Greece* help'd *Palestine*;
As if the World were all one Familie.
But in the Law we may this Caut'ion see;
We should beware of looking for our pay
At other hands, than his to whom we pray;
Lest we deflow'r the Benefit we do,
Whilst Profit, or Vain-glory we pursue:
And lest, as 'tis too common, we pretend,
That we should want our selves what we should lend,
That Age and Accidents come on so fast,
That 'twill not for our own Occasions last;
The Law does promise a divine Supply,
For those who with its lib'ral Rule comply:
And that we may the more in God confide,
Bids us observe how well he does provide
For th' animal, and vegitable kind:
And we think meanly of the Sov'raign Mind,
If we distrust his Word without a Pawn,
As if he were a Man whose Credit's gone.

XV. *Of Swearing.*

Forswearing is forbid by other Laws:
By this, to swear at all, without just cause;
And such Veracity it does require,
That if 'twere kept, we need no Oaths require.

In

XVI. *Of other matters.*

In this Religion we shall find amass'd,
What-e're of Excellent has ever past,
In Sentences, or Writings of the Wise,
Besides the Sanction added from the Skys.
In what a moving manner does this teach
A modesty in actions, and in speech,
Temperance, Goodness, honest deeds, and mind,
Prudence, with ev'ry office of Mankind;
What is from Magistrates, and Subjects, due,
From Parents, Children, Servants, Masters too,
And what, where Marr'age-rites make one of two:
Often it does the needful Rule repeat,
Against what with such specious shews do's cheat,
Honour and Glory, which have past for brave
With *Greeks* and *Romans*, most reputed grave:
But then the Summary of all does prove,
That we should worship him through whom we move,
And as our very selves, our Neighbours love;
That is, should never fail for them to act,
What for our selves we should be sure t'exact.
But some may urge against those Verities,
The mighty oppositions that arise
Among Professors of Christ's holy Name;
The multitudes of Sects themselves proclaim.

XVII. *Answer to an Objection taken from the Controversies among Christians.*

Yet this a ready answer may receive:
That in all arts we may the same perceive:
Either thro imbecillity of mind,
Or that to parties they're too much inclin'd:
Yet these are limitted to certain bounds,
Which in their controversies serve for grounds,
On which each his own Argument would build;
And thus the Men in Mathematicks skill'd,

Have

Have heretofore about the making Circles ſquare:
When 'tis as evident that none e're were.
Whether if equals be from equals ta'en,
That is not equal which does yet remain.
In Phyſicks, Med'cine, other Arts beſide,
This diff'rence, and agreement, is deſcryd:
Nor does vari'ty of opinions, known
Among the Men who Chriſt's Religion own,
Hinder at all but that they may agree,
In what we the cheif Rules of living ſee,
Thoſe gen'rous Principles, before expreſt,
Which recommend it's worth above the reſt.
And even this it's certainty proclaims:
That they, whom warm diſſention moſt inflames,
That he commanded theſe never deny,
E'vn they who will not with his Law comply.
If any yet, to contradict delight,
'Tis queſti'oning whether the Snow be white;
For as the Error, here, Senſe can refel,
An vniverſal concord, theſe can tell,
Among all Chriſtians that have ever wrote,
Or from the firſt to laſt Chriſt's Doctrine taught,
To which ſome by their deaths have Atteſtation brought.
That they did theſe for their Religion own,
To equal Judges is as clearly ſhown,
As 'tis that *Zenophon* did, or *Plato*, write,
What does this Age under their names delight:
Who wrote what we to *Socrates* aſcribe,
Or *Zeno*, Founder of the Stoick Tribe.

XVIII.

The Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion is farther prov'd from the Excellency of the Author.

A third rich Magazene of Motives lies,
For the embracing Chriſtian Verities,
I'th'admirable way in which 'twas taught,
And to ſo far extended Regi'ons brought;

This

This brings us to the Author of the Rules.
The chiefest Masters of the Greci'an Schools,
Confest they nothing with assurance tell,
And fancy'd Truth lay bury'd in a Well,
Our Minds they thought were dim at things
divine,
As th'Eyes of Owls when the bright Sun does
shine.
Besides, some Vice the best of them did taint,
Some with gross flattery their Princes paint,
Some *Brothel*'s lov'd, and Acti'ons of the dark,
Others with *Cynick* Impudence would bark;
Clear Proof of their contenti'ous Tempers springs,
From quarrels about words, and trifling things.
In sacred Worship they're discover'd cold;
Since they who but one Deity did hold,
Put mighty slights on him they did adore,
Giving that very Worship unto more,
Such as they knew had no Divinitie,
Thinking from Blame the publick use would free.
Nor were they sure what meed Vertue should
have,
And this shew'd *Socrates*, when nigh his Grave.
Mahomet, Author of far spreading Rites,
As is confest by his own Proselites,
Dissolv'd in Luxury and Lust did live,
Nor left he the least earnest to believe,
That the Rewards he promis'd shall be found,
Perpetua'l Feasts and Lusts for ever crown'd;
When his own Body ne're had Life again,
And does intomb'd at *Mecha* still remain.
Moses who had the Jews divinely taught,
Tho a brave Man, yet was not free from fault;
When God would send him to th'*Egypti'an* Land,
He did too long the Embassy withstand;

And when God promis'd Water from the Rock,
He thought 'twas his Credulity to mock,
And he himſelf ſcarce any thing enjoy'd,
Of all that has his Foll'owers Faith employ'd,
In deſert places with their Factions tir'd,
Himſelf debarr'd entring the Land deſir'd.
That Chriſt was ſinleſs his Diſciples taught,
Nor was one Proof againſt it ever brought;
He was th'Example to the Rules he gave,
And executed all that God would have;
Patient of Injuries, and Torments too,
As on the Croſs he did moſt fully ſhew;
A lover of Mankind, and ev'n of thoſe,
Who to that cruel Death did him expoſe;
Ev'n for thoſe Miſcre'ants he to God did pray,
Nor did he to his Foll'wers Promiſe pay,
In which himſelf had not firſt led the way,
As is not only ſaid, but clearly prov'd.
His Viſit, after being from Life remov'd,
How many were there that at large declar'd,
Who him had touch'd, as well as ſeen, and heard?
The Twelve were Witneſſes when he did riſe,
And was receiv'd within the joyful Skies,
Where, as appears, a Pow'r ſupream he gain'd,
From which they whom he left behind obtain'd,
Not only Tongues which they were never taught,
But Pow'r for other things, which Nature never wrought;
All which he promis'd when he left this Life,
And which ſhould ſilence ev'ry doubtful Strife;
Whether he will, or's able to make good,
What he has promis'd for our Spirit'ual Food.
And hence we gather his Religion's beſt;
That he perform'd himſelf what e're he preſt,
And was of his own Promiſes poſſeſt.

If

If then we view his Doctrine ith' effects ;
They're such, that either God his World neglects;
Or we must think the Doctrine from above.
Nothing more worthy of God's care does prove,
Than that what's best should be the fartheſt spred ;
And this of Christ's Religion may be said,
'Tis taught thro' *Europe*, and ev'n fartheſt North,
All *Asia*, with its Islands, know its worth,
Egyptians, *Ethiopians*, *Africans*,
Are joyn'd in this with the *Americans* :
Nor has't been only late, but long ago,
As Hist'ries of succeſſive Ages show,
The Books of *Christians*, Acts of Syneds too :
Among *Barbarians* a Tradition's known,
Of Miracles by some Apoſtles shown,
The Lives and Journeys are with them expreſt,
Of *Thomas*, *Andrew*, and some of the reſt.
Clement, *Tertullian*, and others note,
That *Britains*, *Germans*, places moſt remote,
Did, in their time, *Christianity* imbrace.
What other Worship e're reach'd such a space ?
If you say th' *Ethnick's* rival in this Fame :
It is not one Religion, but one Name,
Nor ever all of them worship'd the same :
Some Stars, the Elements some did adore,
Some Ani'mals, some what no subsiſtence bore,
Nor did they the same Law, or Maſter own.
The *Jews*, a scatter'd People, were but one ;
Nor has their Law been much obſerv'd to spred,
Since *Christ* his beams of Truth divine did shed.
Many the Rules of *Mahomet* obey ;
Yet *Christians* live among them of that way,
And often are more numerous than they :
When in some places where they *Christ* receive,
Not one *Mahometan* is known to live.

From the wonderful Propagation of this Religion.

Considering the weakness and simplicity of them who first taught this Religion.

Men readily enough Examples take
From Kings, and others who great Figures make,
Especially if Law, and Force, they add;
Hence their encrease th'Ethnick, and Turkish had:
But they, who Christ's, Religion, first profest,
Nothing of Empire, or of Wealth, possest,
As humble in their Fortunes, as in Mind,
Foll'wing mean Trades to which they'd been design'd:
Yet in the space of thirty Years, scarce more,
They this dispers't, the Roman Empire o're,
And to the *Parthians* this, and *Indians* bore:
And for three Ages only private hands
Did carry on the preaching Christ's Commands,
Without external Promises, or Threats,
Nay ev'n against th'Authority of States;
Yet before *Constantine* in Christ believ'd,
Thro' most o'th' *Roman* World he was receiv'd.
Who with the *Grecians* preach'd up Moral rules,
For other Arts were famous in the Schools;
Plato for th' Art of measuring the Earth,
Peripateticks how the growth, and birth,
Of Animals, and Plants, did Lectures read:
And with what subtilties Disputes proceed
The *Stoicks* in their labour'd Logicks shew,
The *Pythagori'uns* th'art of Numbers knew;
Plato, and *Zenophon*, could charm the Sense,
So *Theophrastus*, with their Eloquence:
But they who first the Christi'an Doctrine taught,
By no such art upon their Hearers wrought,
Their Speech was simple, without any snare,
They only did in downright terms declare,
What their great Master gave them in command,
And how the Threats and Promises did stand.

This

This progress ne're had been from that alone,
But Mir'cles or God's Blessing we must own,
Or both, to carry it so strangely on.

XIX. *And the very great Impediments which might withdraw Men from embracing, or detain them from professing it.*

This may be added here, concerning those
Who first with Christianity did close;
They were not in all other Rites untaught,
So with more ease to that Religion brought:
Much less were they brought up in any way,
Which might dispose them Christ for Lord t'obey,
While Turks and Pagans, and the stubborn Jews,
Had something prev'ous, helping them to chuse:
The last, their Circumcision had before,
And learnt only one Deity t'adore,
Which made them ready *Moses* to receive:
While they, who in *Christ Jesus* did believe,
Had many Obstacles which would withdraw,
Custom a second Nature, humane Law,
Parents Authority, all urg'd t'have kept
The way in which their grave Fore-Fathers slept,
Being *Jews* or *Heathens* bred, so to remain.
Add to all this the certainty of Pain,
Which they by that Profess'on were to gain,
Pain, which by Nature all Men would refuse,
Nor readily would what procures it chuse.
The Christians long debarr'd from Honours were,
Mulcts, Confiscations, Exiles hard to bear,
Were to be 'counted their appointed share:
These things were light, into the Ballance cast,
With Tortures but too exquisite to last,
Cruel as witty Malice could invent;
And Life was often in the Conflict spent;
As the Histor'ians of those times have wrote,
So many Deaths, no Famine, Plague, or War,
has brought.

Nor were they with the common Deaths to ſtrive;
But put into conſuming Flames alive,
Or look'd for Crucifixion, and the like,
Reading, or thoughts of which, with Horror ſtrike:
Thro'out the Roman Empire theſe did laſt,
Till their Religion *Conſtantine* embrac'd,
Without them but ſhort intervals were paſt:
Elſewhere they did continue longer ſtill:
Yet all the blood they did ſo freely ſpill,
The Church, but with more living ſeed did fill,
And thus the more was ſcatterd, more did ſpring:
If other Rites into the Scales we bring,
The Greeks and other Heathens, us'd the moſt
Of their admir'd Philoſophers to boaſt,
Bate *Socrates*, *Gymnoſophiſts* a few,
Scarce others dying for their way can ſhew,
And who that thinks can well deny of theſe,
That in their Deaths the hope of praiſe did pleaſe?
They thought it glor'ous to ſurvive in Fame,
And have Poſterity their Deaths proclaim.
While many ſuff'ring for the Chriſti'an Name,
Were Men in Fortunes, and Ambition low,
That ſuch Men were, their Neighbours ſcarce did know,
Women, and tender Virgins, gentle Youths,
With their laſt Blood bore witneſs to theſe Truths.
Who can believe of theſe, a vain deſire,
Or hope of laſting Fame, to this ſhould fire?
Beſides our Martyrologies contain,
But a ſmall part of thoſe who thus were ſlain.
And rarely can the Jews a Martyr boaſt,
Beyond *Antiochus* his time at moſt,
Since Chriſt's Religion is for this the beſt,
Is it not to be choſe before the reſt?

When

When the vast Multitudes we duly weigh,
Who did their Lives for this Religion pay,
Each Sex, each sort of Men, in ev'ry Age,
We needs must think some pow'rful cause
t'engage;
And what to so great constancy could move,
But Truth, and th'holy Spirit from above?
If by the Arguments already brought,
In some Conviction is not wholly wrought:
Let them consider, Proofs in sev'ral ways,
As is the nature of the thing, one weighs;
One sort does with the Mathematicks suit,
Another when in Physicks we dispute,
One when for Action we would Counsel take,
Diff'rent when Fact does th'only question make:
And this is always yeilded by the Wise,
When no exception 'gainst the Witness lies:
And if we will not this for Proof admit,
We all the use of History must quit,
The most approved Med'cines we must loose,
That Piety too, which does its self diffuse
Where ever Parents are, and Children, known,
For want of Evidence must needs be gone.
It is the pleasure of the Pow'r most high,
The things wherein he'd have our Faith to lie,
That our Obedience it's Reward may gain,
Should not appear so evidently plain,
As things which Sense or Demonstrati'on shew;
Yet as much Light should carry, as is due
For raising a most firm belief, in those,
Who will not pertinaci'ously oppose;
Hence we the Gospel as a Touch-stone find,
To try and prove which is the upright Mind.
For since so many good, so many wise,
Embrac'd so highly [penal] Verities;

It shews that other's Incredulitie,
Never from a defect of Proofs can be,
But that they would not have that pass for true,
Which their Affecti'ons did so much eschew,
That it was hard, with a regardless Eye
To suffer all that glitters here, to lie; (hold
Which needs must be, if they for Truth would
All that has been concerning *Jesus* told,
And therefore would obey the Rules he gave:
An Evidence for this herein we have,
These, many Histories for true receive,
Which they on bare Authority believe,
Of which no Foot-steps at this day are known;
As for the History of Christ, are shown:
This in the Jews Confessi'ons we may trace,
And the Assemblies which these Truths embrace,
Of which some cause we cannot but assign;
Nor can't be any thing below divine:
No humane force could it so long maintain,
And such remote and spreading Conquests gain:
This could proceed from Miracles alone,
But if we are resolv'd them to disown,
That without them it should such force acquire,
Is what we ought much rather to admire.

Lib. III.

I.
For the Authority of the Books of the New Covenant.

HE whom these Arguments, or others, move
As true, and best, Christianity t'approve,
Would he the knowledg of it's Precepts gain,
Must search those sacred Scriptures which obtain

The name of Teſtament, or Cov'nant, new;
Where we the whole of this Relig'ion view:
For this we ſhould not ſcruple to receive,
What Chriſti'ans always hold that they believe:
To Men of ev'ry Sect we Credit pay,
As to the Books they ſhew us of their way:
And thus the *Alcoran* is juſtly thought,
To ſhew what Doctrines *Mahomet* has taught.
Since then the Truth of Chriſt's Religion's known;
And that lies in the Books the Chriſti'ans own;
If any a more ſpecial Proof require,
We them t'admit this equal Rule, deſire,
That they who any Writing will oppoſe,
With which for ſev'ral Ages Men did cloſe,
Are bound thoſe Arguments firſt to maintain,
Which may impeach the Credit that did gain,
Till which, of full Authority it muſt remain.

II. *That the Books which have any Authors Names to them, were writ by them whoſe Names are prefixt.*

The Books in which no Chriſtians diſagree,
To which ſome certain Names affixt we ſee,
To have been wrote by thoſe whoſe Names they bear,
The Writers of ſucceeding times declare;
Thus *Juſtin*, *Irenæus*, *Clement*, ſhew,
With other Men of Ages that enſue,
That all the ſacred Books were titled true.
Add farther, as *Tertullian* does declare,
Some of th'Orig'inals in his time were fair:
And ev'ry Chriſtian Church the ſame did own,
Ev'n before Councils to unite them, known.
Nor did the *Jews*, or *Pagans*, ever doubt,
But they were theirs, whoſe Names they bear about.
Julian confeſt in terms by no means dark,
That *Peter*, *Paul*, with *Matthew*, *Luke*, and *Mark*,

Were Authors of thoſe Books which bear their Names;
Thus he but his own want of Wit proclaims,
Who doubts of what both *Greeks* and *Romans* thought,
T'have been by *Homer*, or grave *Virgil*, wrote:
More on that Evidence ſhould we rely,
Which almoſt ev'ry Nation does ſupply.

III. *The doubt remov'd from Books anciently doubted of.*

Yet does the Volume now in uſe, contain
Books, which at firſt did not like Credit gain;
Thus 'twas with one which we St. *Peter*'s call,
The ſame did thoſe of *James* and *Jude* befal:
And thus with two, which the like fate conſent,
From *John*, the Elder ſty'd, ſuppoſes ſent.
Th' *Apocalyps* as doubtful has been thought,
And the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* wrote:
Howe'r that many Churches them receiv'd,
And ſacred their Authority believ'd,
Appears, in that Chriſti'ans who firſt did write,
Them, as of ſuch Authority, do cite;
Which may in reaſon well be thought to ſhew;
Of ſome, nothing at firſt, ſome Churches knew;
Howe're the Truth being ſet in a clear light,
They did with others in their uſe unite:
Nor was there any cauſe in theſe to cheat;
For without them the Syſtem were compleat,
The ſelf-ſame Doctrine they do but repeat.

IV. *The Authority of ſuch Books as have no Title prov'd from the quality of the Writers.*

Nor ſhould th'Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* wrote;
Or two reputed *Johns*, be ſpurious thought,
Or the *Apocalyps* of doubtful Fame
'Twixt *John* th'Apoſtle, and one of his Name:

The

The quality of Books is most esteem'd:
Some Histories have been authentick deem'd,
Whose Authors never did themselves declare;
Thus the Account o'th' *Alexandrian* War,
Does with a gen'ral Reputati'on pass, (was.
Since part of what he writes the Author plainly
So since the Authors of the Books we cite,
Liv'd in the very times of which they write,
And as they add themselves, partakers were
Of Gifts, which fell to an Apostle's share;
It is enough our full belief to gain:
If any say these qualities they feign,
And to some Books fictiti'ous names did give:
They urge what none that think can e're believe;
As if who preach up Truth, and Piety,
Should venture without any cause to lie,
Which not all good Men only, would refuse,
But to forbid by Law the *Romans* chuse.

V.
That the Penmen wrote the Truth, because they had knowledg of the things which they wrote.

The Books which the new Cov'nant, then, declare,
Were doubtless wrote by them, whose Names they bear.
Or such, at least, as they themselves profess:
And, what there is like reason to confess,
The things of which they wrote the Authors
Nor could desire to mix what was untrue: (knew,
For Falshood we no other grounds receive,
Than Ign'rance, or intention to deceive. (those,
Matthew, *John*, *Peter*, *Jude*, were known of
Whom Christ t'attest his words, and Actions chose;
And therefore needs must know the things they
And this to *James* may be apply'd as well, (tell,

Be'ing

Be'ing an Apoſtle, or to Chriſt of kin,
And Biſhop of *Jeruſalem* had bin,
Advanc'd by the Apoſtles to that See.
St. *Paul* from Error muſt have been as free,
When what he learn'd from Chriſt he did declare,
Being rapt above the Regions of the Air:
To him, or *Luke*, who always clos'd his ſide,
For what Chriſt did, Faith ought not be deny'd:
That *Luke* did know, 'tis eaſy to ſuppoſe,
What of our Saviour's Life and Death he ſhows;
Being born hard by, and having travell'd o're
The places Chriſt had viſited before,
And had, Eye-witneſſes of what he writes
Often conſulted, as himſelf recites;
Many with whom he Friendſhip did contract
Beſides Apoſtles, could atteſt the Fact,
Some whoſe Diſeaſes at Chriſt's word had fled,
Who ſaw him living after being dead.
If *Tac'itus*, and *Suetoni'us*, are believ'd,
In things which happ'ned long before they liv'd,
Becauſe they're diligent Enquirers thought;
Rather ſhould one eſteem what *Luke* has wrote.
Of *Mark* a conſtant Fame is known to paſs,
That he Companion to St. *Peter* was,
And what he wrote ſhould have the like eſteem,
As if St. *Peter* dictated to him:
And farther hardly any thing is there,
But what th'Apoſtles Writings do declare:
Nor could the Writer of the things (*a*) reveal'd,
When God large folds of Providence unſeal'd,
Have been impos'd upon in what he ſaw;
Or he, who wrote (*b*) to them o'th' Jewiſh Law,
In what he ſays from th' holy Spirit came,
Or the Apoſtles witneſſing the ſame.

(*a*) Apocal.

(*b*) *Author to the Hebrews.*

That

That they to cheat with Lies could not deſign,
Mention'd before, we always ſhould ſubjoin,
When we would reinforce that Law divine,
Which from our preaching *King* at firſt was ſpred,
With his return to life from being dead.
Who Witneſſes of ill intent'ion blame,
The grounds of ſuch their ill intent'ion name;
Here can be none: If any ſay they feign,
That they the cauſe they manag'd might maintain.
For ſuch a cauſe why ſhould they ſo contend,
Which no advantage here could recommend?
Nor did they any dangers thereby ſhun,
For that alone they did all hazards run,
And, as to worldly Goods, were quite undone:
No Man can therefore think they choſe this cauſe,
But in obedience to God's holy Laws;
Which would not have encourag'd Falſities,
Chiefly in that wherein Salvation lies.
So ill a charge theſe things with ſtrength oppoſe;
The pious Doctrines which they did propoſe,
Their Lives unſpotted, and ſo free from blame,
That their worſt foes their Ign'rance only name,
No proper Parent of invented tale:
To ſhew their faithfulneſs this ſhould not fail,
That their own faults they leave upon record,
That all forſook, and *Peter* thrice deni'd their (Lord.

VI. *And becauſe they would not lie.*

But God himſelf did witneſs to them bear,
Whilſt he by Wonders did their Truth declare;
On which ſince they, and all Men of their way,
Such mighty ſtreſs with ſuch aſſurance lay,
And to the Publick Scrutiny advance
The Times, and Places, ev'ry Circumſtance;
The Magiſtrates concern'd, did they ſo pleaſe,
The truth or falſhood might have learnt with eaſe.

VIII. *A Confirmation of the Fidelity of the Authors from the Miracles they wrought.*

This

IV. This too th'assisting hand of Heav'n do's shew,
That many spake the Tongues they never knew,
And Pains fled suddenly in publick view.
Nor were they terrifi'd from what they prest,
To think the ruling *Jews* were foes profest,
Nor were the *Romans* less enclin'd to close
With what might them for Novelties expose.
Nay *Jews* and *Pagans*, of the Times most nigh,
That these had Wonders wrought durst not deny.
St. *Peter*'s Mir'cles *Phlegon* does report,
An Annalist o'th' Emp'rour *Adrian*'s Court:
And *Christians* pleading before any State,
Urge all these facts, as being past debate:
That at the Tombs of Martyrs there remain'd
A wondrous Pow'r, they publickly maintain'd;
And that throughout some Ages it did last;
Which if untrue, they might with shame be cast,
When they were put to justify their Cause,
Before Dispensers of the Civil Laws:
So frequent were the Prodigies there wrought,
Of them such uncontested Proofs were brought;
As even *Parphiry* himself confest.
With what's already said we well might rest;
Yet there's an heap of Arguments behind,
Which may commend those Books to 'a serious mind.

VIII. *The Truth of the Writings confirm'd, in that they contain many things which the Event has prov'd to be reveal'd from Heaven.*

In them are many things plainly fore-shown,
Which no Man could by nat'ral skil have known;
Th' event declaring them from God alone.
As the (*a*) large-sudden-spreading of that way,
And that (*b*) no Age should see its pow'r decay,
That it should (*c*) be rejected by the *Jews*,
While *Gentiles* far remote obedience chuse:

(*a*) Mat. 13. 33, *&c.* John 12. 32. (*b*) Luke 1. 33. Mat. 28. 20. John 14. 16. (*c*) Mat. 21. 43, *&c.*

That

That 'twould the hatred of the (*d*) *Jews* procure;
What Cru'lties for *Christ*'s Name Men should endure:
The (*e*) siege, and dismal ruin to invade
That (*f*) City, where the *Jews* their Worship paid;
That there the Temple should be left forlorn,
With the (*g*) Calamities still to be born.
Add here, if God regard our mortal state,
Chiefly in what t'his Worship does relate,
He cannot suffer Errors to abound,
Where nothing but his Honour Men propound.

(*d*) Mat. 10. 17.
(*e*) Mat. 10. 21. 39. & 23. 34.
(*f*) Mat. 23. 37, 38. Luk. 21. 20, 24.
(*g*) Mat. 23. 35, &c.

IX.
As also from the care becoming God in preventing supposititious Books.

But for the sacred Books this proof supplys,
That of all Christian Sects did e're arise,
Scarce any has been found that these denys.
Some the whole Volume for authentick take,
And they who doubts concerning any make,
Others receive which do with them agree;
When yet we such warm differences see,
That what one Party for their Rule have chose,
Others would shun, if 'twere but to oppose.

X.
Answer to the Objection in that divers Books were rejected by some.

Indeed some Christians did those Books disown,
Which were against their darling notions known,
Either, who, out of hatred to the *Jews*,
Their God, and Law, did with reproaches use,
Or, fearing Evils *Christians* were to bear,
Themselves deceitfully did *Jews* declare.
But by all *Christians* these abandon'd were;
While, as they were by the Apostles taught,
No differences unkind Divisions wrought,
So they did not from Piety withdraw:
These, who adult'rate thus the Christi'an Law,
May meet Conviction in what's said above,
Where that there is (*a*) one Deity we prove;

(*a*) Lib. 1. Sect. 1.

Who

(b) Lib. 1. §. 6. Who into being (b) the Creation ſpake:
Nay, ev'n the Books they for authentick take,
Shew that the *Hebrew* God did all things make:
(c) Exod. 33. 19. He was by *Moſes* repreſented (c) good,
But is thro' *Jeſus* better underſtood.
The other ſort of Men we will confute,
Where we againſt the real *Jews* diſpute.
In the mean while this wonderful may ſeem,
That with theſe Men St. *Paul* has no eſteem:
More Churches no Apoſtle did erect,
And thoſe ſtupendous Works he did effect,
Were then by Chriſtians publickly maintain'd,
When they might be diſcover'd if they feign'd:
If it be granted Miracles he wrought,
What colourable ground can then be brought,
We ſhould his heavenly Viſions disbelieve;
Or what he ſays, he did from Chriſt receive?
But if on Chriſt he did ſo much attend,
That he would nothing teach, him to offend;
Durſt he have ventur'd with a lie t'impoſe?
His Doctrine, moſt condemn'd, who can oppoſe,
Where, from their Ritu'al, *Jews* diſcharg'd he ſhows?
Nothing but Truth its ſelf could this procure;
(d) Phil. 3. 5. He (d) Circumciſion did before endure:
(e) Acts 16. 3. (e) Some voluntary Proofs in him, they ſaw
Of def'rence pay'd unto the Jewiſh Law,
(f) 2 Cor. 12. 10. And to more (f) hardſhips did for Chriſt aſpire,
Than did the Rigor of that Law require:
Theſe things, by no means pleaſing to the Ear,
He did to all his Followers declare;
Inſtead of one, the *Jews* no more afford,
(g) 1 Tim. 5. 5. To keep all days for (g) Sabbaths to the Lord;
(h) 2 Cor. 6. 4, 5. (h) Inſtead of ſome ſmall charge did them befal,
To bear with equal Mind the loſs of all;

And

And for the Blood of Beasts, they us'd to slay,
Our own an Offering to our God to pay.
Nay he affirms, that hands with him were joyn'd
By (i) *Peter*, *John*, and *James*, all of one Mind; (i) Gal. 2. 9.
Had it been false, he durst not this proclaim,
When they might have deny'd it to his shame.
Excepting then, those we before observ'd,
Who scarce to bear the Christi'an Name deserv'd,
The manifest consent of all beside,
Who with these Books, as sacred, have comply'd,
Joyn'd to the Miracles their Writers wrought,
And God's (k) peculiar care of such things taught; (k) Sect. 9.
Should be enough to quiet doubting Minds;
When for all Histories of other kinds,
Which are not of such Proofs as these possest;
No man will their Authority contest,
Unless some Reason do against them weigh,
Which none, that well considers, here can say.

XI.
Answer to the Objection, that these Books seem to contain things impossible.

If any say these Books such things contain
Which, as impossible, no Credit gain;
It soon appears that the Objection's vain.
W'have shown above the Pow'r of the most High
In things that carry no (l) Repugnancy,
Tho they by far all humane reach exceed,
Such are the things that Admiration breed,
Those hidden Vertues Nature never knew,
And after Death seeing the Moon's renew. (l) Lib. 2. Sect. 7.

XII.
Or things contrary to Reason.

Nor is there greater weight in what they move,
Who somethings there would against Reason prove:
More Wit or Learning can such Men pretend,
Than did from the first times these Books defend?

What

What e're we with right Reaſon ſhew'd t'agree,
In lively Characters you there will ſee;
(m) Lib. 1. §. 1. That God (m) exiſts, and is in Eſſence (n) one,
(n) Sect. 2. Poſſeſt of all (o) Perfection ever known,
(o) Sect. 3, 4, 5. Pow'r, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Life, beyond degree,
(p) Lib. 1. §. 6. That the whole (p) Univerſe he caus'd to be,
(q) Ib. Sect. 10. That he alone (q) preſerves things what they are,
(r) Sect. 11. But (r) chiefly Man, his more immediate care:
(s) Lib. 2. Sect. 14. That he both (s) can, and will, fully reward
Thoſe, who him only, as their End regard.
(t) Ib. Sect. 16. That we our (t) looſe Deſires ſhould bridle in:
(u) Lib. 1. §. 6. That all the race of Mortals are of (u) kin;
From whence an Argument of force does prove,
That we ſhould one another truly love.
Reaſon's a Guide deceitful, very weak,
If to know any thing beyond we ſeek,
Or of God's Nature, or his Soveraign Will:
What lew'd Diſſentions all the Schools did fill,
While beſt Philoſophers betray'd their want of Skill!
Nor need this be a wonder, ſince we find
They little underſtood of humane Mind,
And how can the Supream then be defin'd?
The Prudent know, that it much danger brings
To ſearch into the purpoſes of Kings;
And that the ſearch however would be vain.
But what Conjecture can expect t'attain,
To what th'Almighty freely does ordain?
That 'tis not to be known *Plato* did hold,
Unleſs an Oracle the ſecret told:
But then no Oracle that ever was,
Had proofs ſo clear, as the new Cov'enant has:
Nor ever yet did Man attempt to prove,
That any Revelati'on from above

Did,

Did, of God's Nature, or his Will, make known
What is repugnant to what there is shown:
Some things of middle nature we may view,
Which of themselves claim'd no obedience due,
Or else in which no turpitude did stand,
Which before *Christ* had licence, or command;
These Books for want of such, are no less full;
Since later Laws may former disanul.

XIII. *Answer to an Objection, that some things in these Books are inconsistent with each other.*

But some their doubts concerning them declare,
Upon the disagreeing senses there:
Yet this should credit add with them that find,
How they for Faith and Doctrine are conjoyn'd,
So as in other Writings ne're was seen,
Amongst the Learn'd that ever yet have been,
Whether you *Jews*, or *Greeks*, or *Romans* name,
In ev'ry Science Men of greatest Fame:
Of ev'ry Sect some Men will disagree,
This we in *Zenophon* and *Plato* see:
Men from themselves are often diff'rent known,
Either forgetting what before had gone,
Or being doubtful what to fix upon:
But all those Writings which we Sacred call,
About those things to no division fall,
Which do the Rules of Faith and Life contain,
Or how *Christ* liv'd & dy'd, and liv'd again;
And they agree entirely in the main.
Indeed in circumstances of no weight,
We sometimes find occasion of debate;
But many things, which lie from us conceal'd,
Might all these seeming diff'rences have heal'd;
Or, that like things at diff'rent times abound,
Or Names ambiguous do the Mind confound;
Or had one Man, or Place, Names more than one;
And such-like circumstances, now unknown:

But this them from imputed fraud may free;
Who lie by compact, will in all agree.
If some slight disagreement still appear,
Which will no Reconciliati'on bear;
We ought not therefore all these Books suspect,
Unless we will all History reject;
For we as much may of that kind perceive,
In those which we without dispute receive:
Polybi'us, and *Herodotus* to name,
Livy, and *Plutarch*, Authors of great fame:
How much more equal is it not to doubt,
When it appears the Writers were devout;
And thought it criminal, things false to tell?
We by extrinsick Proofs might such repel.

XIV. *Answer to an Objection taken from outward Testimonies, where 'tis shewn that they make more for these Books.*

But I affirm, none such are to be found;
Unless our doubts on later times we ground,
Where Enemies the Christi'an Name would wound.
We cannot such for Witnesses receive;
Nay, foreign Proofs confirm what we believe.
That *Jesus* suffer'd, *Jews* and *Heathens* taught,
And that he and his Follow'rs Wonders wrought,
Some forty years from Christ *Josephus* wrote,
Who does in Terms the most perspic'uous own,
What was by *Herod*, *Pilate*, *Festus* done;
Felix, *John Baptist*, and *Gamali'el* names,
And how *Jerusalem* expir'd in Flames:
The *Talmudists* the same fully relate;
Tacitus tells th'effects of *Nero*'s hate,
When he against Christi'anity did rage:
And several Books were extant in that Age,
(Such was old *Phlegon*'s we before did name)
And publick Records mentioning the same.

To

To which the Christians commonly appeal'd;
Nor was the Star, pointing at Christ, conceal'd:
They name the Earth-quake, and Eclipse o'th' Sun,
Against the Course in which Nature had run,
When yet the Moon at Full felt not the loss,
About the time when Christ was on the Cross.

XV. *Answer to an Objection, about the Scriptures having been changed.*

No other difficulty I can name,
But that the Writings are not still the same:
The fate of other Writings we must own,
To have betided these may here be shown:
The Copier's Neglect, or faulty Will,
If not his want of necessary Skill,
In Letters, Syllables, or Words, might wrong,
By change, omission, some of them too long:
But these things should no Controversy raise,
Being but incident to length of days:
But that by fraud, or any other ways,
In Doctrinals all Copies vicious were,
Or where they memorable Facts declare,
Don't or by Books, or Witness, of those times, appear.
What ever of that kind is offer'd since,
Must pass for Railing, not for Evidence.
This may be thought enough to silence those,
Who for Mutations holy Writ oppose;
On whom it lies not to object, but prove;
Since they'd a settled Reputation move;
But we their vain pretence may soon detect,
Who what ne'er was, nor can be, here object.
Before we prov'd, to any equal Mind,
The Books were their's whose Names affixt we find;
It follows then there was no change of Books:
And if to every part of them one looks,

No change of part materi'al can be found;
Some end who made the Change muſt needs propound:
That, where the Change was made, ſhould differ more
From thoſe remaining what they were before,
Than here the ſharpeſt ſearch could e're explore:
Nay, as before was in this Tract obſerv'd,
A wonderful Conſent's throughout preſerv'd:
Beſides, when any of th'Apoſtles wrote,
Or Men who Apoſtolical were thought,
Sincere Profeſſors of the Chriſti'an Name,
As their concern for Truth it well became,
Muſt needs have us'd all diligence, to gain
The valu'd Tranſcripts of what they maintain,
Through *Europe*, *Aſia*, *Ægypt*, theſe diffus'd
(For the Greek Tongue among all theſe was us'd)
Could not but ſpread as far as Chriſt was known.
Conſider farther, as before was ſhown,
That ſome Originals were ſeen to laſt,
Until the ſecond Century was paſt:
A Book of which ſo many Copies were,
Preſerv'd not only by a private care,
But by whole Churches which did Chriſt obey,
No Man to have been counterfeit can ſay.
Add, that 'tis evident the ſacred Text
Was read in ſev'ral Tongues i'th'Ages next,
The *Syriac*, *Æthiopic*, *Arabic*,
And *Latin* too, agreeing with the *Greek*,
In all thoſe weighty things of which we ſpeak.
Farther their Writings to our hands are brought,
Whom the Apoſtles, or their Follow'rs, taught;
Who many Paſſages from them do quote,
Agreeing with that Senſe which now we note.

Nor in the Church was any Man possest
Of such Authority above the rest,
That they'd comply, if he a Change had prest.
This *Irenæus*, and *Tertullian*, shew,
This *Cyprian* too, who without fear withdrew
From those who then were most reputed sage:
And, if we come to the succeeding Age,
We find Men of best judgments, greatest parts,
Wh'had run their Stages thro' the lib'ral Arts,
After the utmost search these to receive,
And of Orig'nal Purity believe;
In proof of this divided parties joyn;
All who believe the World a work divine,
And *Christ* the Founder of a sacred Law;
Each against changing would the other awe;
Nor yet did any Sect that licence take,
That to have chang'd them for their side would make;
Which hence is seen, that when e're they dispute,
Each would from thence his Opposite confute.
What's urg'd of Providence concern'd for all,
To every part of these alike will fall,
Nor ought it of our God to be believ'd,
That he would suffer Men to be deceiv'd
(In what's of greatest moment to the Mind)
Who had his Honour above all design'd,
And next the way to Happiness would find.
For many thousands such as these to run
Into those Errors which they could not shun!
This may be thought sufficient to maintain,
What the New Testament does there contain,
And there at large is our Religion seen.
Yet since th'Almighty's Pleasure it has been,

XVI. *For the Authority of the Books of the Old Covenant.*

The Truths the *Jews* believ'd should now appear,
Which no small Light to our Religion bear,
'Tis not amiss to shew their Credit here.
What prov'd those other Books were titled right,
Will serve for these, where any shall deny't.
The Authors of those Books the *Jews* receiv'd,
Were Prophets, or most fit to be believ'd,
Such *Esdras* was, thought to have joyn'd in one,
Those scatter'd Books which went before alone;
When at that time some Prophets were alive,
Who would against an Imposition strive,
Such *Haggai*, *Malachi*, *Zach'ry*, were known:
To pass what was in praise of *Moses* shown;
Pagans confirm not only what he wrote,
But what of later times the *Jews* were taught:
So the *Phœnician* Annalists proclaim
David, and *Solomon*, so great in Fame,
And they their Treaties with the *Tyrians* Name.
Nebuchadonozor, with others joyn'd,
Who *Caldees* rul'd, we in *Berosus* find;
Ægyptian Vaphres, *Jeremy* does name,
And *Aphries* in *Herodotus*, are the same.
Of *Cyrus*, and who follow'd in his charge
Until *Darius*, *Gracians* speake at large.
And in those Books *Josephus* did endite,
When *Appian* to his way he would invite.
We many things may gather in a Throng,
Which to the Honour of the *Jews* belong.
And to what's mention'd here we well may add,
What we from *Strabo*, and from *Trogus* had:
But we who in our suff'ring Lord believe,
These Books without disputing should receive;
Since there is scarce a Book but ours do cite,
And so far to agree with theirs delight;

And

And when Christ blames the Doctors of their Law,
And what in the proud *Pharisee* he saw,
He never menti'ons any Change they made,
In what from any Prophet was convey'd,
Or that supposititious Books they brought,
Nor can this after Christ of them be thought:
Consid'ring how the wandring *Hebrew* Sheep,
Scatter'd throughout the World, these Books did keep.
Ten of the Tribes first from *Assyr'ia* led,
And after two, did through all *Media* spread;
And after *Cyrus* did the *Jews* restore,
Many did ramble Foreign Nati'ons o're,
These Men the *Macedoni'ans* did invite
In *Alexandria* to take delight:
The Cruelty *Antiochus* did shew,
The Civil Wars the *Asmodeans* knew,
The Wars which *Pompey*, and which *Sossius* made,
Did force the *Jews*, in various parts to trade,
These did the *Cyrenaic* Region fill,
The Cities too of *Asia* saw their Skill;
This *Macedonia*, *Lycaonia*, knew,
The Iles of *Crete*, *Cyprus*, and others too:
That anciently at *Rome* they num'rous were,
Both *Horace*, *Martial*, *Juvenal* declare.
No Art could People, so divided, cheat;
Nor could they have conspir'd t'a Fraud so great.
Almost three hundred years e're *Christ* was here,
Some Kings of *Egypt* made their care appear
To propagate those Books the *Jews* admire,
Whilst they the *Seventy's* Version did require:
So in like sense the *Greeks* did them receive,
Whence with a change 'twas harder to deceive:
The Language which we from *Caldeans* take,
And that which at *Jerusalem* they spake,

That is half-*Syriack*, help't theſe Books to ſpred,
Part before *Chriſt*, part after he was dead:
Aquila, *Sym'chus*, *Theodoſion*,
Each to have turn'd them into *Greek* are known,
Which with the *Seventy*, *Origin* did view,
With others, in the main all of them true,
In things of weight none can a diff'rence ſhew.
Philo liv'd famous in *Calig'la*'s Reign,
Joſephus to *Veſpaſian*'s did remain;
Both cite, out of the Books among the *Jews*,
The very ſame which at this day we uſe:
And many then of *Jews*, *Chriſtians* became,
Who'd certainly what change they found proclaim,
If 't were of moment, which they might compare
With the moſt ancient Copies that there were;
But far from doing this, they oft delight,
In the ſame ſenſe with *Jews*, their Books to cite.
But any Crime 'gainſt *Jews* has more pretence,
Than either Falſhood, or elſe Negligence.
With ſuch Devotion they theſe Books imbrace,
That they will tell you ev'ry Letter's place.
Add yet a ſtronger proof, which laſt we range,
Theſe Books the *Jews* would not on purpoſe change,
Since thence, who for their Saviour *Chriſt* receive,
Prove ſtrongly, or at leaſt as they believe,
That he they worſhip, that *Meſſias* was,
Of whom the Promiſe to the *Jews* did paſs;
And none can think ſince that diſpute aroſe,
The *Jews* would, had they Pow'r, a Change have choſe.

Lib. IV.

I.
A particular confutation of the Religions oppoſite to Chriſtianity.

TO ſee Mens Perils while we ſit at eaſe,
Is what does too much Human Nature pleaſe;
But it becomes us Chriſti'ans to rejoyce,
Not only at our happineſs of choice;
But to endeavour, to our Pow'r, to free
Thoſe who are toſt in Errors ſtormy Sea,
And to have them our Happineſs partake,
T'wards this great end the former Books did make;
Becauſe the proof of Truth doth that expoſe,
Which do's it ſelf againſt that Truth oppoſe.
But ſince all other Worſhips that are known,
The *Pagan*, *Jewiſh*, that the *Turks* do own,
Beſides the Errors common unto all,
Have each what to its proper ſhare do fall,
And againſt ours, in diff'rent methods fight;
I think I ſhall do Truth the greateſt right,
If I of each make the diſpute entire;
Which doing, of the Readers I deſire,
That laying all Parti'ality aſide,
And what e're Cuſtoms long have held them ty'd,
They'd uſe unbyaſs'd judgment for their Guide;
While with us ſuch Impediments have place,
We go with Fetters unto Truth's embrace.

II.
And firſt of Paganiſm: That there is but one God: That created Spirits are good, or bad; the good not to be worſhipped without the direction of the moſt High God.

Firſt then, againſt the *Pagans* we diſpute,
And theſe we did before enough confute,

If

If they believe more than one Pow'r above,
In an eternal equal ſtate to move;
We having ſhew'd only one God to reign,
Who all things of himſelf did firſt ordain;
If of created Minds their God they make,
Either for good, or bad, we theſe muſt take;
I. If good they ſay; Firſt, let them have a care,
Leſt they are cheated with a Name ſo fair,
For it is very dang'rous erring there;
Leſt Foes they take for Friends, and thoſe that fell,
Inſtead of thoſe who ſhould God's Pleaſure tell:
In Reaſon too we ſhould ſome diff'rence find
For Worſhip paid to them, and the firſt Mind:
Let's know what order is aſſign'd to each,
What good reſpectively to us they reach;
That we may judg what Honour the great King
Intends we to thoſe lower Pow'rs ſhould bring;
Since none of theſe they can pretend to know;
This how uncertain is their way may ſhow;
How much more certain they were not to err,
If to the Chief this Worſhip they transfer:
This *Plato* held the duty of the Wiſe;
This does he with more confidence adviſe;
Since the good Minds be'ing Servants to the Beſt,
If him they pleaſe they may ſecurely reſt,
Of their good Offices they can't but be poſſeſt.

III. *That Evil Spirits are ador'd by Pagans, and how impious a thing it is.*

Then no ſlight Arguments belief perſwade,
That unto evil Spirits *Pagans* pray'd.
Firſt, that their Followers they did not bring
Unto the Worſhip of th'eternal King;
Nay, did his Worſhip what they could impair,
Or ſtrove with him to have an equal ſhare:

Then they did strongly Magistrates incite,
Against the Men who worship'd God aright;
And the misguided Rabble urg'd their pains:
When yet the Poets in licenti'ous strains,
With Parricides and Rapes their Gods did charge;
And *Epicurus*, that things go at large,
Without the Conduct of a Pow'r Supream,
Was bold to make the subject of his Theam.
And the most diff'rent Rites one Compound made,
Ægyptian, *Phrygian*, *Greek* together laid,
The *Thuscan* too, they did at *Rome* perswade.
They ridicul'd the *Jewish* way alone;
As is i'th'Epigrams and Satyrs shown,
And sometimes Banishment shortned their Woes:
Then against Christi'ans Persecuti'ons rose;
Of which the only cause to be assign'd,
Is, that they worship'd the Eternal Mind;
That thus the Gods they serv'd their Honours lost,
Fearful of him alone who all engrost.
The third Exception's taken from the way,
In which they worshipt those they did obey,
Such as could never please an honest Mind.
Thus there we humane Sacrifices find;
Themselves in Temples naked Men expose,
And Lewdness reign'd in their most solemn shows;
These Rites now in *America* proceed,
And *Africa* these Monsters still does breed:
Nay, further yet, those there have been, and are,
Who worship Minds which evil they declare.
Thus *Ahriman* a God the *Persians* made,
And *Greeks* to *Cacodemons* worship paid:
The *Latins* to *Vejovis*, and *Indians* yet,
With *Ethiop'ans* to such Pow'rs submit.

And

And what more truly impʳous can be found?
For of Religious Worſhip what's the ground?
But the belief of Goodneſs we admire,
Which we t' expreſs i'th' humbleſt way deſire;
If a known evil Spirit this receive,
Our ſelves the lye to our own Worſhip give.
This too no leſs than Treaſon muſt be thought,
When th' Honour which due to our King is taught,
Is not withdrawn alone, but giv'n to thoſe,
Who are *his Rebels*, or at leaſt his Foes.
But they are ſottiſh, who e're count upon't,
That a good God will not avenge th' Affront:
They ſhould conſider that his Clemency,
And Juſtice no leſs infinite, agree;
Where bold-fac'd Wickedneſs all bounds exceeds,
Juſtice, as of neceſſity, proceeds.
Nor do they leſs deſerve Rebukes to bear,
Who ſay they only worſhip out of Fear;
When He whom we believe ſupreamly good,
Is, as communicative, underſtood,
And thence from Him all other Natures roſe;
From whence this Conſequence directly flows:
That he does uſe an Abſolute Command,
O're all theſe Workmanſhips of his own hand;
So that from none of them can that proceed,
But he at his free Pleaſure could impede;
Which being granted, we collect with eaſe,
Who e're our God ſo great, ſo good, does pleaſe,
Can ne're from evil Spirits have that hurt,
Which to good purpoſes God won't convert;
Nor can the evil Spirits that command,
Which we ſhould not on that account withſtand;

For

For when the guise of Good the Evil bear,
Then ought we of their slights the more beware,
The Gifts of Enemies deceitful are.

IV. *Against the Worship which in* Paganism *is exhibited to Men departed this Life.*

Some there have been, and yet are known t'have pray'd,
To Men whose Honours in the Dust are laid:
This Worship should have proper marks assign'd,
Distinct from what is paid the Sov'raig Mind,
And thence some good we should expect to find;
But this their Worshippers could never shew,
Not knowing what these Souls departed do.
But against this we chiefly should inveigh,
That many Men to whom they this did pay,
Were more than others for some Vices fam'd,
And thus for Drunkenness is *Bacchus* nam'd;
For Lust thus did their *Hercules* surpass;
Against his Brother *Rom'lus* impious was;
And so against his Father was their *Jove*;
So that the Honour paid to them, would prove
A great Reproach to the true *God* above;
Who does in Probity chiefly delight:
Against it self they make Religion fight; (Rays,
While what should scatter Vice with conqu'ring
Is taught to flatter it with its own Praise.

V. *Against worshipping Stars and Elements.*

The Stars and Elements ev'n long before,
Fire, Water, Air, and Earth Men did adore:
But nothing is more brutish than this way:
Since the chief part of Worship is to pray,
Th'Objects of this should have Intelligence;
That th'Elements have none is plain to Sense.
If any say Stars are with this endu'd;
The ground of such their Fancy ne'r was shew'd;

By th'Operations, which their Natures tell,
We cannot judg that this to them befel;
Nay, the unalter'd Course in which they move,
The contrary with mighty strength does prove;
This argues they no freedom have of Will,
But do another's Purposes fulfil;
We their subserviency to Man have shew'd,
Whence we should think our selves the best endu'd,
Our better part unto our God more near,
And for that likeness, unto him more dear:
Therefore our selves we ought not to debase,
To what's subjected to us through God's Grace;
Off'rings of Praise for them by us are brought,
Which how to pay they never can be taught.

VI. *Against worshipping of brute Beasts.*

Some in their Worship lower yet do fall,
And thus on Beasts for Aid *Ægyptians* call:
A shew of Reason some may seem to share,
What it't when we with Man's would it compare?
And their Conceptions, whatsoe're they frame,
Ne're from within by words, or writing, came,
Their Works in kind, and manner, are the same.
Numbers and Measures can they comprehend?
Or how the Course o'th'Heavenly Host does bend?
Man on the other side, of strength but small,
Into his Snares makes Birds, Beasts, Fishes, fall,
These by his Wit he brings under his Law,
Ev'n Elephants and Lions keeps in awe,
Horses and Oxen makes together draw;
Things the most noxious useful to him makes;
And thus from Serpents wholsome Medicines
Their Bodies frame, and cure of every part, takes;
Unknown to them, do not escape his Art:

Thence

Thence he the use and worth of them can tell,
What *Species*, and what *Genus*, each befel:
Then he the Structure of's own Body views,
Which him by far the nobler Creature shews:
Whoe're compare aright, so far will be
From thinking one of these a Deitie,
Him he would rather think God did ordain,
As a vicari'ous Pow'r o're them to reign.

VII. *Against worshipping things which are no Substances.*

Latins, and *Greeks*, we find, Devoti'on paid,
To what of no Subsistence Nature made,
Bnt were meer Accidents to things that were;
Impudence, Fever, and the like, to spare:
Health, which in this did much more justly share,
But a true temp'rament of parts we find:
Fortune, that Deity acknowledg'd blind,
Is but a set of Chances to one's Mind:
Th'Affections, Anger, Fear, warm Hope, and Love,
Or others which from Good, or Ill, do move,
As we consider them remote, or nigh,
Chiefly i'th' moti'ons of the Blood do lie,
As th'Animal Spirits carry'd thence are known;
Of these none have a motion of their own,
But on the Empire of the Will depend,
At least for their Direction, and their End.
Of Virtues Worshippers with them were seen;
Prudence, which lies in choice of the right mean,
When we pursue what's represented good;
The braving Dangers, counted Fortitude:
Justice, in keeping from another's right,
And Temp'rance moderating our delight,
Their Dispositions unto Good we find,
Setled by a long Custom in the Mind;

But

But these, as they encrease, so may decay,
And, much neglected, vanish quite away;
Honour, to which they oft did Temples raise,
Is known to lie but in another's Praise;
This oft the Good have mist, the Bad receiv'd,
So easie 'tis for Man to be deceiv'd!
Since no Subsistence then these have at all;
And so below things of Subsistence fall;
Nor can these understand the zealous Pray'r,
With which our Rev'rence of them we declare,
To worship such Reason must disallow:
Rather to Him we should devoutly bow,
Who only gives, and can to us preserve,
What we the most to be admir'd observe.

VIII. *Answer to the Argument of the* Gentiles *taken form Miracles done among them.*

But then to Miracles *Pagans* appeal,
As if the Truth these of their Worship seal:
Whereas we may with Justice them suspect:
Their Sages many, as unprov'd, reject.
Night and Retirement were for some the Scene,
To others but few Witnesses have been,
Such as with ease might swallow down a Cheat,
From subtle Priests, well practis'd in Deceit:
Not knowing Nature many did admire,
And qualities occult their search did tire;
With admiration thus some Load-stones saw
To its embrace the distant Iron draw:
Simon did in these Arts successful prove;
And thence did *Apollonius* wonder move.
Some things by such we must effected own,
Which have a Pow'r more than of Nature shown,
Or what Man could draw forth from that alone;

But

Yet these do not imply a Pow'r Divine,
To which we should Omnipotence assigne:
But intermedi'ate Spir'its for this suffice,
Higher than Men, yet under Deities,
Who being very nimble, strong, and wise,
May bring together what remote does lie,
And thence compose things wondrous to the Eye;
But that these Spirits cannot good be thought,
Their Worship therefore bad, before was taught:
And this against their Venerati'on Arms,
That Men pretend to force them down with Charms;
When yet the wisest Heathens own it plain,
That words the pow'r but of Perswasi'on gain,
And that according as their Sense we find.
This proof may of their pravity be joyn'd,
That oft they promiss'd him or her to move,
Against their Inclination, unto Love;
Injuri'ous in the Promise, or Command, (brand.
And Humane Laws such Acts with Sorc'ery
Nor is it strange, if he whom we adore
With the Delusi'ons of ill Spirits bore,
To punish them who fell from him before.
But then this may their Impotence perswade,
That none had signal ben'fit by their Aid:
If any thence return'd to Life again,
They ne're were known in Life long to remain;
Nor could they act like those who Life enjoy'd.
If e're a Pow'r divine did seem imploy'd,
It never was foretold that this was done,
That Men might into that Religion run:
And nothing hinders but the Pow'r divine,
Might have, what greatly differs, in design.
As for Example, If one should believe,
That to one blind *Vespasian* sight did give,

'Twas that he Reputation might acquire,
To gain that Pow'r to which he did aspire,
He being one whom God before did chuse,
To execute his Judgments on the *Jews*.
For other Prodigies like cause might be,
In which we nothing of Religion see.

IX. *And from Oracles.*

What was before obsery'd we may apply,
When on their Oracles they would rely;
Chiefly that God may Cheats on them permit,
Who nat'ral Light, or old Tradition quit.
And generally 'twas doubtful what was meant,
The words complying with what e're event:
If any thing more plainly was foretold;
A Pow'r divine for this we need not hold;
From nat'ral Causes known it might proceed;
Physicians thus know how Diseases breed:
Much comes from due observing what has past,
For which th'experienc'd need no Figure cast.
But if by *Pagan* Prophets e're was shown,
What had dependance on God's Will alone,
No cause of which besides that e're was known;
It was not to confirm one *Pagan* Rite,
But rather it against them all did fight.
Thus *Virgil*, not discerning what was meant,
In his fourth Eclogue, yet, did represent,
What some old *Sybils* scatter'd leaves did shew,
Of Christ, and the great Benefits t'ensue.
Those Leaves to shelter noble Fruit were made,
While they an universal King did shade.
Whom to obey, if we'd be happy they perswade;
That he who of this Pow'r should be possest,
Should make his Progress from the brightned East.
And *Porphyry* an Oracle does name,
Where th'*Hebrew* God *Apollo* does proclaim,

Vid. Cic. de Divinatione *lib.* 2. Eum quem re verâ Regem habebamus appellandum quoq; esse regem si salvi esse vellemus.

To be the only God the World should fear,
While others vanish'd into empty Air:
If this *Apollo*'s Votaries obey'd,
Ev'n his own Worship must aside be laid:
But if their Worship still they paid at large;
They'd their own Deity with falshood charge.
If by their Oracles these Spir'its design'd,
Any advantages to humane kind;
Some certain Rule of Life they needs must give,
In following which Men happily might live:
Yet they nor Rule, nor Happiness, propound,
With which their blind *Devotos* might be crown'd:
Nay, on the contrary, we've often found,
They in their Verses worst of Kings did praise;
And Wrestlers unto sacred Honours raise;
Unto unlawful Loves they did incite,
And catching Wealth without regard to Right,
Encourag'd Slaughters, and a vici'ous Train;
The bare reciting which, our Leaves would stain.

X.
The Pagan Religion rejected; because it fail'd of its self as soon as humane Aids were withdrawn.

This against *Paganism* strong proof supplies,
That it on humane Force so much relies,
That whensoe're that was not on its side,
As if through that it stood, it quickly dy'd:
But where *Christi'anity*, or *Turcism*, reign'd,
Only in story th'Ethnick Rites remain'd;
When yet Christianity was known to grow,
Ev'n with the Blood did from its Martyrs flow.
This Conquest's gain'd in spite of all the Pow'rs
Of the enrag'd, and bloody Emperours.
Nor could learn'd *Julian*'s Wit keep up their way,
But sensibly it fell into decay,
Nor Force, nor high Descent, against it brought;
A Carpenter, the Founder's Father, thought;

Nor did that way which made all others fail,
With flow'rs of Rhet'rick on Men's Minds prevail;
None of these Ornaments their Speech did grace,
Who first perſwaded Men Chriſt to embrace:
Of Gifts, they being poor, made no pretence,
Nor mov'd by Flatteries to tender Senſe:
Nay, they declar'd that Pleaſures they muſt ſhun,
And for that Law all worldly hazards run:
And this ſubdu'd not *Paganiſm* alone,
But ev'n the Spirits which did that Worſhip own,
Chriſt's Name of them Men's Bodies diſpoſſeſt,
And their known Voices they at that compreſt:
And being ask'd, why then they ſilent were?
They were againſt themſelves forc'd to declare,
That where Chriſt was invok'd their Pow'r
diſſolv'd to Air.

XI. *An Anſwer to them who aſcribe the riſe and decay of Religion to the efficacy of the Stars.*

Some, hardly worth the labour to confute,
Unto the Influ'ence of Stars impute
The riſe, and progreſs, of Religious Rites:
But this their Science no known Rule unites,
And all the certainty which there is known,
Is that from Stars there's nothing certain ſhown:
But none of thoſe effects I here do mean,
Of which ſome neceſſary cauſe hath been,
According to the Law which Nature gave,
But what the Will of Man for cauſes have,
Which being of its ſelf entirely free,
Can't from abroad receive neceſſity:
But if th'Impreſſi'on from without's ſo ſtrong,
That the meere paſſive Will is forc'd along;
In vain was giv'n that grateful pow'r of Mind,
Which we in choice, after conſid'ring, find,
The Equity of Laws could not but ceaſe:
From all Rewards and Penalty's that frees;

For

For where the Act is necessary found,
What fault to punish; Merit to be crown'd?
Besides some Acti'ons of the humane Will,
Justly deserve the Character of ill;
But if of these Heav'n were the proper Mint,
As heav'nly Bodies God did so imprint,
That they compel the Act we seem to chuse;
Of causing moral Ill 'twould God accuse,
Who must be thought in full perfection good:
Besides his hate to Ill is understood,
By his known Law which does from that disswade;
But if he it inevitable made,
By an effective Pow'r himself instill'd:
'Twould shew as if things contrary he will'd;
That the same thing should, and should not be done,
While by his impulse into Sin we run.
Some, with more probability, declare,
That Stars first influence the ambi'ent Air,
Our Bodies this; and qualities conveys,
Which in our Minds such kind of Passi'ons raise;
That these often entice the yeilding Will,
And their Commands it often does fulfil:
Suppose that this were granted ne're so clear;
'Twould nothing make to help the questi'on here;
For *Christ*'s Religion doth withdraw the Mind,
From things to which the Body is inclin'd:
How then could bodily Affecti'ons move,
The Christian way of Worship to approve?
And how could Stars to cause its rise be thought,
When they only by those Affecti'ons wrought?
Whatever Laws to Men the Stars would give;
The wise and good exempted from them live:
Wisest Astrologers do this confess;
And wise were they who first did Christ profess;

But if in Learning any force we ſee,
From the Contagi'on of the Fleſh to free;
Such among Chriſtians have been ever known,
Who in this Praiſe to flouriſh, all muſt own:
Beſides the learned in the Syd'ral Arts,
Own the Effects reach but to certain parts,
And thoſe Effects but temporary are;
When this Religion yet has laſted fair,
One thouſand and ſix hundred Years, and more,
It's Praiſes eccho'd forth from Shoar to Shoar,
In diſtant Regions ſtretch'd out ne're ſo far,
Whatever the Poſiti'on of the ruling Star.

XII. *'Tis ſhewn that the chief Principles of the Chriſtian Religion are approv'd by wiſe Pagans: and if there be any thing in it hard to be believed, things of the like kind are found among the Pagans.*

This to Chriſtian'ty may Trophies raiſe,
That every part ſhines with ſuch piercing Rays,
Does with ſo fair a Countenance delight,
That it convinces with its Native Light:
So that enough we among *Pagans* find,
Out of whoſe Sayings in one Syſtem joyn'd,
All our Religious Truths we might deſcry:
As that Religion don't in Rituals lie,
But th'Efficacy in the Mind to place:
Adultery to lie in wiſh't embrace:
Not to repay the Wrongs which we receive:
One Wife, one Husband, ſhould together live;
The Bond perpetual which does them unite:
That this, Man's Office which ſhould moſt delight,
To do to Men what good is in his pow'r,
Chiefly where ſharp neceſſities devour:
From Oaths as much as may be to forbear;
To be content for Clothing and for Fare,
With what the needs of Nature do require.
But where Chriſtian'ty ſtill riſes higher,
And diffidence with wonder ſeems to ſtrike,
We with the wiſeſt *Pagans* find the like.

What

What of the Souls immortal State they hold,
And Life returning unto Bodies cold,
We shew'd before. *Plato*, of *Caldees* taught,
Of the Divin'ity this distinction thought,
The Father and the filial Mind, from whom
He held the Universe at first to come:
He adds a Mind which over-spreads the whole.
Nor does sly *Julian* their Belief controul,
Who think the Humane Nature with Divine,
Might to compose a single Person joyn:
Such he believ'd that *Æsculapius* was,
Whom he would have from Heav'n directly pass,
To teach Mankind the helpful Art of Cures;
Who sees not what offence Christ's Cross procures?
Yet Heathens in their Gods the like things brook:
Some we find Servants, others Thunder-struck;
Some into pieces cut, Wounds others took;
Their wisest held a good Man's Joys the most,
When him his Honesty the dearest cost,
Plato, as if what was to come he found,
Says, If we a true Pattern would propound,
It must be one whose Vertue is despoil'd
Of all those Ornaments with which it smil'd:
He must be wicked thought, expos'd to scorn;
A shameful Death must after all be born.
Patience exemplify'd unto the height,
Must by such Instances as these incite.

Lib. V.

I. *A Refutation of Judaism, beginning with an address to the Jews.*

THat glim'ring Light saluting by degrees,
As from a dismal Cave himself one frees,
Points out their State, who quitting th'*Ethnick* (way,
After the Jewish Rites their Worship pay.
That part of Truth, that noble entrance made,
Makes me in friendly manner Jews perswade,
What's offer'd to receive with equal Ears;
We cannot but confess that it appears;
That they from those Religious Men descend,
To whom th'Almighty Embassies did send,
By Prophets and his Min'istring Spir'its above;
From out of them did the *Messias* move,
And they who first preach'd up the Christian Law;
Theirs is the Stock whence Nourishment we draw,
Being ingrafted there; that they preserve
Those Oracles of God which we observe,
With the like Veneration as do they:
And with St. *Paul* most zealously we pray,
That God would suffer soon that day to dawn;
When from before their Eyes the Clouds with-
drawn,
They may discern with us the Law fulfill'd:
And, as into their Prophets was instill'd,
That we who long no sacred Cov'enant knew,
May lovingly embrace th'enlightned Jew,
And hand in hand that only God adore,
Whom *Abr'am*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, serv'd before.

First,

II.
'Tis shewn that the Jews ought to allow of Jesus his Miracles as sufficiently prov'd.

First, we desire them that they would admit,
What pleading for themselves they urge as fit.
If to them any *Pagan* Questi'on move,
How Miracles by *Moses* wrought, they prove?
They say no more, but that so constant Fame
Of their own People, did his Works proclaim;
As needs must come from those who saw the same.
So, that *Elisha* multiply'd the Oil,
And purg'd th' *Assyr'ian* from his leprous Soil;
That with new Life a Young Man did arise,
After his weeping Mother clos'd his Eyes:
And several other things of the like kind,
Among the Jews firmly believ'd we find,
As from good Witnesses to them consign'd.
But that *Elijah* sprang up to the Skies,
They trust *Elisha*, thought t've seen him rise:
Twelve Witnesses, whose Lives none could reprove,
Attest t'have seen our Sav'our hence remove,
As he ascended to his Throne above.
A greater Cloud of Witnesses maintain,
That after Death, they saw him live again.
Which, if considered, manifestly shew,
That what he taught on Earth, must needs be true.
Nor can one Argument be urg'd by Jews,
But what we equally at least may use:
But to omit Authorities to press,
The Jews, and their learn'd Talmudists, confess,
That our *Messias* things prodigious wrought;
And this might against them enough be thought;
Nor can God authorize a Doctrine more,
Than shewing Miracles upon that score.

Some

III. *An Answer to the Objection, that these Miracles were wrought by the help of Dæmons.*

Some to the Pow'r of Dæmons this impute,
Which Calumny we did before refute:
Shewing that where Christ's Doctrine did prevail,
The Pow'r of Dæmons totally did fail:
That Christ in *Ægypt* Magick-Arts did learn,
To have less shew of Truth we may discern,
Than the like Accusation *Pagans* raise,
To blemish *Moses* his less setled Praise,
As is in *Pliny*, and *Apuleius*, seen:
But that in *Ægypt* Christ had ever been,
Does only from his Follow'rs Books appear,
Who that he went an Infant thence, declare.
Moses, and other Jews, expresly own,
That he resided there to Manhood grown;
But then the Laws *Moses* and *Christ* promulg'd,
Should stop the progress of this Charge divulg'd;
Since both of them against such Arts inveigh,
As hateful to that Pow'r all should obey.
But that in *Ægypt* such had ever Birth,
While Christ, or his Disciples blest the Earth;
Or any other place, who can believe,
To do what we, as done by Christ, receive?
The Dumb to speak, the Lame to walk, the Blind,
All of a sudden long-wisht Light to find.
The Emperors, *Tyberius*, *Nero*, more,
Who spar'd no Costs th'utmost of this t'explore,
Had th'Art thus far arriv'd, had known't before:
And if the Talmud we admit as true,
The Jewish Sanh'drim th'Art of Magick knew;
The better to convict the Guilty here:
And since to Christ they th'highest hate did bear,
Envy'ing that Pow'r his Miracles declare;
They would the like by the like Art have done,
Or shew'd them thence, by Proofs which none can shun.

Some

Some Jews ascribe the Miracles Christ did,
Unto a Secret by King *Sol'omon* hid,
Which for above a thousand Years had slept,
By two fierce Lions in the Temple kept:
That this was read by Christ; a Fiction bold;
Since of those wondrous Lions nothing's told
In any Book of the Old Testament,
Or by *Josephus*, or the *Romans* sent
Along with *Pompey* to the Temple's spoil.

IV. *Or by the force of Words and Syllables.*

But if the Jews confess the Fact, the while,
It follows from their own *Mosaick* Law,
That none should from blest Jesus Faith with-draw.
Moses in (*a*) *Deutro'my* expressly says,
God after him would other Prophets raise;
And, that the People should obey them, shews,
Denouncing Penalties if they refuse:
Of these are *Miracles* the certain sign;
Nor can we more illustrious ones divine:
If one a (*b*) Prophet shall himself declare,
And make by Miracles his Title fair;
He bids them not to listen to his Speech,
If he to worship other Gods should teach;
For God will (*c*) such among his People bear,
To try if to his Worship they'l adhere.
Hence their Interpreters rightly collect,
That as true Prophets they should all respect,
Who don't the Worship of that God divide,
Who does unequall'd over all preside:
It being enjoyn'd, that in this case alone,
They should not trust the greatest Wonders shown.
No Worship to false Gods Christ taught to pay;
Nay shew'd it penal unto such to pray:
Moses, and foll'wing Prophets, he requir'd
To be receiv'd as Men of God inspir'd:

V. *It is shewn that Jesus his Miracles were divine, because he taught the Worship of one God, the maker of the World.*

(*a*) Deut. c. 18.

(*b*) Deut. 13. 1, 2, 3.

(*c*) Vers. 3.

Against

Againſt his Miracles then nothing lies;
That he and *Moſes* differ, can't ſuffice.

VI. *Anſwer to the Objection taken from the difference between the Law of* Moſes *and of Jeſus, where is ſhewn that a more perfect Law than that of* Moſes *might be given.*

For this their Rabbies as a Rule maintain,
That he who does a Pow'r for Wonders gain,
And proves himſelf a real Prophet thence,
With any ſacred Precept may diſpence,
Except the worſhipping the Pow'r Supream.
'Tis clear as if 'twere wrote with a Sun-beam,
What Legiſlative Pow'r with God did reſt,
When unto *Moſes* he his Will expreſt;
In times ſucceeding he the ſame muſt have.
Who in his proper Right Laws ever gave,
Is not thereby hindred from making thoſe,
Which do directly former Laws oppoſe.
To urge that God's immutable, is weak,
Not of his Nature, but his Works, we ſpeak.
The Light for Darkneſs, Youth for Age does change,
Summer for Winter, works with God not ſtrange.
(d) Gen. 2. 17. *Adam* (d) had leave, only one Tree deny'd,
To feaſt himſelf with ev'ry Fruit beſide:
The killing Men in general God forbad;
(e) Gen. 22. 2. *Abram* (e) to ſlay his Son his Precept had:
Off'ring elſewhere than at th'appointed place,
(f) 1 Kings 18. 38. Now he refus'd, now (f) bleſt of his free Grace.
Moſes his Law, beſides, tho good we own;
Dos't follow that a better can't be known?
With Children childiſh Talk the Parents uſe,
Nor to connive at faults of th'Age refuſe;
But when adult they will correct the Speech,
And Precepts of the ſtricteſt Vertue teach.
How great the beauty of an honeſt Mind!
And what Rewards it ſhall hereafter find!
(g) Heb. 8. 7. But that the Law did of (g) Perfection miſs,
This to be thought a Proof ſuffici'ent is;

That

That in those times some holy Men out-do
Whatever by the Law they're prompted to;
Moses Revenge does partly lawful make,
Partly the strictest Justice bids them take;
Yet, (*h*) being wrong'd in the most high degree,
Him praying for those Murmurers we see.
So his (*i*) Rebelli'ous Son *David* would spare,
And (*k*) bittereſt Curses did with Patience bear.
We read not that good Men their Wives did quit,
Altho their Law did plainly this permit.
Laws are adapted for the major part:
Some things were to be past by, there, with Art,
To a more perfect Rule then to be squar'd,
When Men God's Spir'it in larger measure shar'd,
By which out of all Nati'ons God would draw
A People subject to a purer Law.
Moses propounded, plainly, no Reward,
Beyond what does this mortal State regard.
Who then can question but there might have been
A Law more perfect, than what that is seen,
Which might eternal Bliss clearly propound,
And this is in Christ's Instituti'on found.

(*h*) Numb. 12. v. 13. & 14. 2. 10, 19.
(*i*) 2 Sam. 18. 5.
(*k*) 2 Sam. 16. 7, 11.

VIII. *That* Moses *his Law was observ'd by Jesus while he was on Earth; nor were any Commandments after abolish'd, but what had no intrinsick Goodness in them.*

Here by the way we this Remark may chuse,
With what Injustice the coæval Jews
Christ, tho obedient to their Law, did use:
He had been (*l*) circumcis'd, like them did eat,
His (*m*) Habit too was Jewish, as his Meat;
He to their Priest sent (*n*) Lepers which he cleans'd,
Nor with one of their (*o*) Festivals dispens'd;
The Paschal, and the rest observ'd with Zeal;
When he did any on the (*p*) Sabbath heal,

(*l*) Luke 2. 21. Gal. 4. 4. (*m*) Mat. 9. 20. (*n*) Mat. 8. 4. Mark 1. 44. Luke 5. 14. (*o*) Luke 2. 41. John 2. 13. 23. John 7. 8. (*p*) Mat. 12. 5.

Shew'd that their Law, and Commentators too,
Allow'd Men on that day ſuch works to do.
(q) Acts 10. Coloſ. 2. 14. Some of their Laws, then (q) firſt declar'd repeal'd,
After his Triumph over Death reveal'd:
He being into th' inmoſt Heavens receiv'd,
(r) Acts 2. 33, 36. The (r) Holy Sp'rit adorn'd thoſe that believ'd.
And thus he his full Regal Pow'r maintain'd,
Apoc. 1. 5. James 1. 25. In which the Legiſlative is contain'd.
(s) Dan. 7. 13, &c. This (s) *Daniel* ſaw in his Prophetick view,
Who, after *Syria* 'and *Egypts* Fate did ſhew,
(The laſt of which was while *Auguſtus* ſway'd)
That unto one all Pow'r ſhould be convey'd,
(t) Vid. Comment. Filius hominis Hebræis vilitatem quandam ſignificat. To whom, tho in his outward habit (t) low,
All Nations of the Earth ſhould ever bow.
That part, beſides, of the Moſaick Law,
Th' obedience unto which *Chriſt* did withdraw;
Had nothing honeſt in it ſelf alone,
But things indiff'rent, mutable, thence known.
If of themſelves they neceſſary were,
Would God but to one People them declare,
And that not till two thouſand years and more?
While *Abel*, *Enoc*, *Noe*, who liv'd before;
Melchis'dech, *Abram*, *Iſa'c*, *Jacob* too,
And *Job*, all dear to God, none of this knew,
Or what from nothing hardly was remov'd;
Yet was their Faith never the leſs approv'd;
Large were the marks that them th' Almighty lov'd.
Moſes on *Jethro* did not urge thoſe Rites:
Nor *Jonah* on repenting *Ninivites*;
Nor others, writing to the *Moabites*,
To thoſe of *Caldee*, *Egypt*, *Zidon*, *Tyre*,
Any account concerning theſe require,
When to a reck'ning all their Sins they call:
Theſe Precepts therefore were not general:

But

But either to keep off some Sin design'd,
To which the *Jews* were known the most inclin'd:
Or else that People, so stiff-neck'd, to try,
How far they'd with the Will of God comply;
If not to typify some future things.
And this no greater cause of wonder brings;
Than if a King all Borough-Laws repeal,
That one may flourish thro' the Commonweal.
Nor any thing the face of Proof has gain'd,
That God from changing has himself restrain'd:
What tho he sometimes these perpetual call?
The like does often human Laws befal,
As different from temporary Laws,
Made for a certain time, and transient cause.
Yet what does hinder but new may be made,
When publick benefit does so perswade?
Thus God the *Jews* did variously command,
When in the (*u*) Wilderness, and (*w*) holy Land: (*u*) Exod. 27.
By Laws perpetual, those God therefore meant, (*w*) Deut. 12. 1.
Which were to stand till his reveal'd Intent.
Which way of speaking all the Nations use,
And should the less move wonder in the *Jews*,
With whom, as such, that (*x*) right and service past, (*x*) Exo. 21. 6.
Which but from Jubilee to Jubilee did last; Levit. 25. 10.
Then the Messiah's Coming they agree
To be the finishing great (*y*) Jubilee. (*y*) Esa. 61. 2.
The Jewish Prophets too plainly foretold
Of a new Cov'nant, promis'd long of old:
And full of this does (*z*) *Jeremy* delight, (*z*) Jer. 31.
Where God does promise to (*a*) infuse the Light, (*a*) Ib. v. 31.
That none need farther groap in baleful Night;
While Truth inscrib'd on ev'ry Breast appears:
Besides, a general Amnesty declares,
Not much in this unlike a mortal King,
If we such low Similitudes may bring:

Who

Who after a defection from his Pow'r,
While Subjects one another would devour,
The better to eſtabliſh laſting Peace,
Them from ſome loads of Impoſiti'ons frees;
And on a perfect Law lets them depend,
Who for the future promiſe to amend.
What is already offer'd may ſuffice;
Yet take their Law as in its parts it lies;
And 'twill appear that nothing there diſplac't,
Could pleaſe God in it ſelf, or always ought to laſt.

VIII. *As their Sacrifices, which of themſelves never pleaſed God.*

Their Sacrifices firſt themſelves preſent, (vent:
Which ev'n ſome *Jews* thought Men did firſt in-
Them fond of various rites we plainly find,
Whence againſt many Gods they are enjoin'd;
Perhaps but requiſit, their minds to wean
From what they had living in *Egypt* ſeen.
When Sacrifice was, with their Offspring, come
To take up in Religion too much room,
As if 'twould in it's ſelf th'Almighty pleaſe,
And him, provok'd unto the heighth, appeaſe,
Without a Reformation in their Lives,
Then it of Reputation God deprives:
Pſalm 50. Of this, he tells them, 'He makes no account,
'How high ſoe're their Holocauſts may mount,
'While Flocks and Herds they on each other 'heap,
'Bullocks,& Goats mingled with harmleſs Sheep;
'With theſe they would propitiate him in vain,
'Since they but render back his own again,
'Tis his what feeds on Mountain or on Plain:
'*No Beaſts or Birds*, ſays he, *my notice flee*,
'*And ſhould I hunger, need I tell it thee?*
'*Mine is the Univerſe with all things there:*
'*Doſt think the Blood of Bulls or Goats my fare?*

'Offer

'Offer to God the Sacrifice of Praise,
'And pay those Vows which thy distresses raise.
Some Jews, still to this ancient Rite enclin'd,
Think the Reproof not against that design'd;
But th'off'rer's pravity of Life and Mind:
Yet who what here is cited well has weigh'd,
Will find, that Victims on the Altars laid,
As of themselves cannot th'Almighty please;
This in the Series of the Psalm one sees:
For to the pious he directs the Speech;
Whom there he does after that manner teach;
That such are call'd together, there we find,
Immed'iately hear, yea my People's joyn'd,
After the Passage we above did quote; (note.
We may a (*b*)) diff'rent form to th'impious
In other places the like Sense is found;
'What tho with Holocausts the Altar's crown'd,
''Tis not the Sacrifice that pleases thee,
'But th'Heart that's humbled its offence to see;
'For thou, O Lord! dost not that Heart despise,
'Which broke and contrite at thy Footstool lies.
Elsewhere, 'The Sacrifice does not delight,
'And the Burnt-off'ring's nothing in thy sight:
'Me thou hast mark'd for thine, nor dost require
'A warm Oblati'on with piac'lar Fire.
'Then said I, I am here to do thy Will,
'In which my own chief pleasure I fulfil:
'Not meerly as an hireling this I do,
'But to th'Impression on my Heart am true.
'My inward pleasure streams forth in my words;
'The transports of my Soul my Tongue records,
'The Contemplation of thy Mercy this affords:
'Thy Nature so veracious, and benigne;
'I ev'ry where proclaim, as 'tis, divine,

(*b*) Psal. 50. 16. *But unto the wicked God saith,* &c. Psalm 51.

Psalm 40.

'Thy Faithfulness and large Compassion shown,
'I loudly in the Congregation own.
Thus does our God, *Esaiah* represents,
Esa. 1. 11, &c. '*Why are so many Sacrifices spent?*
'*Your Holocausts of Rams have tyr'd me quite,*
'*Nor do I in the richest Fats delight:*
'*The Blood of Bullocks, Goats, or tender Lambs*
'*Pleases no more, than do the toughest Rams:*
'*Who bids you thus my Sacred Courts profane?*
And *Jer'my* has a passage no less plain;
Nor does th'Interpreter the meaning strain.
Jer. 7. 21, &c. Thus says the God of Angels, *Israel's* Lord,
'*What tho ye heaps of Holocaust afford?*
'*Eat them your selves for all the good they bring.*
'*Freeing your Fathers from th'Egyptian King,*
'*Nothing of any Sacrifice I said;*
'*This for the necessary Rule I laid,*
'*That I should absolutely be obey'd;*
'*So I their God, my People they should prove,*
'*And they to take the Paths I shew, should love:*
'*Thence all things should to their desires succeed.*
Thus in the Prophet *Hose* we may read;
Hos. 6. 6. '*Beneficence does Sacrifice exceed;*
'*Right thoughts of God before Burnt-Off'rings*
'*pleas'd.*
Thus where in *Micah* one the Question sees,
Mich. 6. 6, 7. What God, displeas'd with us, may reconcile,
Numbers of Rams, or measures of rich Oil?
God thus is represented there, '*I'le tell*
'What's truly good, and pleases me full well;
'*That you to ev'ry one render his due,*
'*And unto all Bowels of Mercy shew;*
'*While humbly before me your self you bear:*
Which places, if consider'd right, declare,

That

That these things of themselves, or i'th' first place,
As pleasing God we ought not to embrace.
But if the People by degrees were known,
As Superstition had upon them grown,
In them to place great part of Piety,
As if they slake the Wrath of the most High;
What wonder is't if God did them remove,
Indiff'rent in themselves, tho ill they prove:
Thus when the Brazen Serpent *Moses* rais'd,
Men, as of Pow'r divine, devoutly prais'd;
Good *Hezekiah* cast it to the ground.
And among them some Prophecies are found,
Fore-telling that these Rites should one day cease:
This from their Law we may collect with ease,
Where only *Aaron*'s Race a Pow'r receive
For off'ring these, and while at home they live.
But then a (c) King is promis'd fat to reign,
'Who should from *Sion* lead his humble Train;
'And both a Priest and King always remain,
'Resembling what *Melchisedec* was known. (c) Psal. 110.
And in *Esaiah*'s Prophecy 'tis shown;
'That Men in (d) *Egypt* should an Altar view,
'Where the *Egyptians*, and *Assyrians* too,
'Should joyn in Worship with the happy Jew. (d) Esa. 19. 19, 23. Ver. 25.
Again, '(e) *They whom vast distances divide,*
'*Who have no common Language for their Guide,*
'*Shall with the Israelites their Off'rings bring,*
'*As Priests and Levites to th'eternal King.* (e) Esa. 66. 20, 21.
This could not be till their Law were repeal'd.
Besides, in (f) *Malachi* it is reveal'd, (f) Mal. 1. 10, 11.
'That God the Off'rings of the Jews did hate;
'That East and West his Name should celebrate,
'And Clouds of Incense should perfume the Skies,
'As from pure hands it to his Throne did rise:

Dan. 9. 27. *Dani'el* relating th'Angel *Gabriel*'s words,
This Oracle concerning Christ, records:
The Sacrifice and Off'ring he removes.
And God by Instances most real proves,
That all th'Oblations *Moses* had enjoyn'd,
Cannot with him any acceptance find;
When more than sixteen hundred Years are gone,
Since Jews have had no Temple of their own;
No Altar, or distinction of their Tribes,
That they may know to offer, as their Law prescribes.

IX. *The difference of Meats.*

Their Law forbidding Meats of sev'ral kinds,
No better grounds for its continuance finds:
For it is evident after the Flood,
No sort of Meat under Injunction stood:
Noah, and his, had the free use of all,
Which as a Right unlimited did fall
To *Abram*, *Isa'ac*, *Jacob*, sprang from *Sem*,
As well as unto *Japhet*, and bold *Cham*:
But when th'*Egyptian* Superstition spread
O're *Isr'ael*'s Seed, thither to Bondage led,
Th'eating some Animals was then deny'd,
As thence were the *Egypti'an* Rites supply'd,
And thence they thought things future were descry'd:
Or else their Law, with Types and Shadows dark,
Did by some Ani'mals certain Vices mark:
That this was not a gen'ral Rule design'd,
We in the instance of those Beasts may find,
Deut. 14. 21. Which free from outward force their Breath resign'd:
Of these unlawful 'twas for *Jews* to eat,
Which for Inhabitants was licenc'd Meat;
Such too, who met with this Indulgence, were,
As God himself commended to their care:

Nay,

Nay, the old Jewish Rabbies did maintain,
That when *Messiah* should begin his Reign,
He should this Prohibition quite remove; (prove.
And Swines Flesh should as clean as Bullocks
And surely since it pleas'd the Pow'r Divine,
People of ev'ry Land in one to joyn;
A liberty in these, beyond dispute;
More than restraint, must such Communion suit.

X.
And of Days.

Let us consider next their Holy Days:
They first were kept in the Almighty's praise,
For their deliverance from th' *Egypti'an* hand,
And leading to the promiss'd Sacred Land:
But *Jeremy* a time to come did shew, Jer. 16. 14.
When new, and greater benefits t'ensue,
Should so the memory of this surpāss,
That Men should hardly menti'on that it was:
Besides, as 'twas with Off'rings, so with these;
'Twas thought they God so in themselves did please,
That keeping them they might indulge their Ease:
Thence representing God, *Esaiah* says,
I hate all your New Moons and Holy Days, Isa. 1. 14.
They're such a burden as I cannot bear.
Most confident they of the Sabbath are:
They urge that Precept always ought to bind;
That 'twas in Paradise *Adam* enjoyn'd:
To which I say, with Rabbies on my side,
The Precepts teaching this we thus divide;
One is, that we the Memory preserve;
Th'other, the day religiously observe;
The first of these is to this day obey'd,
In grateful owning how the World was made:

Th'other requires from all those Works t'abstain,
Which on the common days full licence gain:
The first the Pious kept before the Law,
Obeying this, Men, *Enoch*, *Noah*, saw,
This *Abram*, *Isa'ac*, *Jacob*, kept in Mind,
Whose Travels we at large recorded find;
With them this is not found a day of Rest,
As after leaving *Egypt* 'tis expresst;
From that and the strange progress thro the Sea,
We th'Institution of the Sabbath see; (sung,
(a) Viz. *Of their Progress.* On (*a*) the first day their Thanks to God they
And from that time the sacred Rest begun.
The first observance which is enter'd found,
(b) Ex.16.25. Was, (*b*) when they heavenly Food took from the Ground;
(c) Exod.13.8. And (*c*) their deliv'rance from th'*Egypti'an* Land,
Is mention'd as the cause of this Command:
Care of those Servants too this Law expresst,
Whose cruel Masters would allow no rest,
Who sojourn'd there were to it likewise bound,
That the same face of Quiet might go round,
That this does not take other Nations in,
May be from hence most evidently seen,
That we in many places find it nam'd,
(d) Exod.13.9. A (*d*) *Sign*, a *Covenant*, God with *Isra'el* fram'd:
But that those Laws which did their Sanction gain,
In mem'ry of be'ing freed from *Egypt*'s Chain,
Were not intended ever to remain;
Appears i'th'Promise we observ'd before,
Of greater benefits preserv'd in store.
Add to this farther, If Sabbatick Rest,
As indispensable, at first were prest;
All interfering Laws could not but fail;
When against this some Jewish Laws prevail.

Thus

Thus Circumcision on the Sabbath's good:
Beasts then were offer'd while their Temple stood;
It's mutability their Doctors preach,
Who working on the Sabbath lawful teach,
If authoriz'd by any Prophet's Speech.
Joshu'ah's Command for taking *Jerico*,
They urge as what does such Commission show:
But that in the *Messiah*'s promis'd Reign,
There should no differences of days remain;
Some, from that passage in *Isaiah*, hold, Isa. 66. 23.
Where 'tis concerning that blest time foretold,
'That God's true Worship should be constant known,
'From Sabbath unto Sabbath, and from Moon to Moon.

XI. *And outward Circumcision.*

Let's come to Circumcision long in use,
Before that Law which *Moses* gave the Jews;
To *Abram* and his Seed this was enjoyn'd;
Yet this th'inception of that Law we find:
Thus God to *Abraham*; '*You and your Seed,*
'*Unto the Land of* Cana'an *shall succeed*;
'*That Land where now a Pilgrim's Life you lead:*
'*See that my Cov'nant you observe with care:*
'*This is the Cov'nant I with you declare,*
'*You and the Males which from your Loins descend,*
'*Shall all be circumcis'd unto the end.*
Before we shew'd that i'th'old Cov'nants room
A new one, common unto all, should come,
And this distinctive mark then needs must cease:
Besides some Myst'ry in this Rite one sees;
And this their Prophets shew when they impart,
Precepts for Circumcisi'on of the Heart;
Which is in all our Saviour's Rules descry'd:
Besides the Promises to that apply'd,

Muſt needs be thought intended to relate
Unto the proſpect of a better State,
Eternal Life, which Jeſus ſhews us clear,
Till when it did only in Types appear.
That Promiſe too which did to *Abram* fall,
That many Nations him ſhould Father call,
Seems to deſcribe that happy time, deſign'd,
When all the World ſhould in one Faith be joyn'd,
Which, to expreſs the Goſpel-ſtate we find.
No wonder that the Shadows flee away,
At the deſir'd approach of perfect Day;
That to this ſign God did not ſtint his Grace,
Appears, in that his Favour did imbrace
Abram, and many who before him liv'd,
Before this Mark was in their Fleſh receiv'd.
And while the Jews through the parch'd Deſart came,
It was omitted without any blame.

XII. *And yet Jeſus and his Apoſtles tolerated theſe.*

Much they to Chriſt and his Apoſtles owe,
Who their diſcharge from this encumbrance ſhow.
And this evinc'd by Gifts and Deeds ſo high,
As nothing ſhort of *Moſes* we deſcry.
Yet they who taught the Rule which we admire,
Did not their owning this great Boon require:
But in ſuch things indulg'd them their own way,
So they on others did not th'Impoſition lay:
This ſhews they without cauſe from Chriſt withdraw,
Upon pretence of their old Ritu'al Law.
The almoſt ſole Objection they have brought,
Againſt the Miracles our Saviour wrought,
Being thus remov'd, let's other Mediums chuſe,
Proper for the Conviction of the Jews.

In

In this Profession Jews and we unite,
That Men endu'd with the Prophetick Light,
Did the clear notice of One promis'd bring,
From whom much greater good to them should spring,
Then e're before from Heav'n did Men befal;
HIM, the *Messias* all agree to call.
We, that he has been here already, say;
They, yet expect him in a future day.
Let's search those Books, fairly this Doubt to end,
Which for Divine both sides alike commend.

XIII. *A Proof against the Jews from their confessing that at eximious Messias was promis'd.*

(a) *Ezekiel* shews *Daniel* to be believ'd:
He would not cheat, nor could hav' bin deceiv'd
In what from *Gabr'el* he affirms receiv'd.
He (b) from the Angel's dictating declares,
That there should not elapse five hundred years,
After the Edict publish'd to restore
That City, where the *Jews* all met t' adore;
But the *Messias* should on Earth be seen;
When now above two thousand there have been;
And yet the *Jews* expect him still to come;
Nor can they name another in his room,
To whom this circumstance of Time agrees,
And this their Rabby *Nehumias* sees,
Who fifty years e're the *Messias*'s Reign,
Say's, more than fifty years can't now to that remain.
Another Note we touch'd upon before,
Of having Pow'r from God all Nations o're;
When the *Seleucan* with the *Lagian* Line
Should all Authority, of Force, resign:
The last in *Cleopatra* did expire,
Little before the World did *Christ* admire.

XIV. *'Tis shewn that he is already come, from the presignification of the time.*

(a) Ezek. 14. 14. & 28. 3.
(b) Dan. 9.25.

Ptolemy *the Son of* Lagus.

In

Dan. 9. In *Daniel* a third Note deſerves regard,
Where, from Prophetick Spirit, 'tis declar'd,
That after the *Meſſias* here injoy'd,
Jeruſalem ſhould wholly be deſtroy'd;
And this *Joſephus* to his Age applies,
Haggai 2. 2. A Paſſage of like ſenſe in *Haggai* lies;
Zerubbabel. Their *Governour*, with the High-Prieſt, we find,
After a great dejection ſhew'n of mind,
Seeing the Temple then but lately rais'd,
If with the firſt compar'd, not to be prais'd,
Had hence their drooping hearts with ſpir'ts ſupply'd,
Such honour this ſhall crown, as was the firſt deny'd.
Of Size, Materials, Art, or Ornament,
'Tis plain by Story this could not be meant.
Beſides, the greateſt Hebrew Rabbies hold,
The later was inferiour to the old,
Both for the Majeſty, and Light Divine,
Effuſion too, which with the firſt did ſhine.
Wherein the laſt ſhould yet the firſt exceed,
We may of Sacred Revelation read;
Where God declares his Peace with That ſhould reſt,
By which his Grace and Favour is expreſt.
Mal. 3. 1. This we in *Malachy* at large may find;
'*Who comes to ſeal my Cov'nant with Mankind*
'*I ſend before: The way he ſhall prepare,*
'*And in the Temple ſuddenly appear,*
'*Whom you expect to come, your Hearts delight.*'
Under the ſecond Temple he did write.
'Tis clear then, while the ſecond Temple ſtood,
The Jews were to expect this promis'd Good,
Which from *Zerubb'bel* to *Veſpaſian*'s underſtood;

For 'twas not wholly from its Ruine rais'd,
While *Herod*, they who valu'd Grandeur, prais'd,
By sev'ral parts they did compleat the pile,
Which the same Temple we may justly stile.
'Tis plain they then did for *Messiah* look,
From whence, some blindly *Herod* for him took.
Some, others; some, *Judas* the *Gaulonite*,
When *Jesus* liv'd who needs must be the right.

XV. *With an Answer to what is said, of his coming being delay'd for the Sins of the People.*

Some Jews perceiving how these Motives press,
That the appointed time is past, confess.
But think their Sins of it th'occasion were:
To wave how positive their Prophets are,
Without Condition tacitely imply'd;
How could the Advent be for these deny'd?
When *Dani'el* from a sacred impulse spake,
That Ruine should for these *Jerusalem* o're-take,
Soon after the *Messiah*'s peaceful Reign:
Besides another cause of's Advent's plain,
To be the Healing a corrupted Age,
And Men t'a better Rule of Life t'engage;
While for the past he did God's Wrath assuage.
In *Zach'ry* see a sacred Promise lie, (supply; Zach. 12. 10,
That God with Grace would *David*'s House & 13. 1.
From thence an open Fountain should appear,
Which from their Sins *Jerusalem* should clear.
The Jews besides a strong Traditi'on own,
That *Ischopher Messiah* should be known;
That is design'd th'Almighty to appease;
But could he be with-held for that Disease,
Which 'tis most evident he was to ease?

XVI. *Also from the present state of the Jews compared with what the law promises.*

That the *Messiah*'s come, we may evince
From a by-no-means disputable Sense:

God's

God's Cov'nant with them in their Law ex-
Declares they ſhall in *Paleſtine* be bleſt, (preſt,
While they obed'ient to thoſe Precepts reſt;
But when from theſe they a Defection make,
Exile and other Woes ſhould them o're-take:
But when a lively Senſe of their Miſdeeds,
Sincere Compunction and Contrition breeds;
How much ſoever diſtant they remain,
They all ſhould ſee the Holy Land again.
More now are paſt than fifteen hundred Years,
And no Completion yet of this appears:
Still they in Exile without Temple live:
Often they to rebuild it vainly ſtrive.
Wond'rous Erupti'ons of reſiſtleſs Fire,
Have forc'd the baffled Work-men to retire,
This *Ammianus Marcellinus* ſhows,
Tho he did Chriſtianity oppoſe.
When formerly that Peoples Sins encreaſt;
When with their Children they did *Saturn* feaſt;
When for no Crime Adultery did paſs,
To rob Widows and Orphans uſu'al was,
And to fill up the meaſure of their Guilt,
Innocent Blood was without Mercy ſpilt;
For theſe againſt them Prophets oft complain'd,
And Exile they, for Puniſhment, ſuſtain'd;
Yet ſeventy Years, of this was th'utmoſt date,
And God compaſs'onating their low Eſtate,
Did by his Prophets keep their Spirits up,
And tell when he'd remove that bitter Cup.
But ſince they laſt were driven from their Land,
They ſeem kept out by an Almighty Hand,
Baniſh'd, contemn'd, their Prophecies all ceaſt,
And no fixt time for their return expreſt;
Their Rabbies with Deluſion ſeem poſſeſt,

To

To Fables and ridic'ulous Doctrines fall,
Which they their Oral Law ſottiſhly call;
Theſe like blind Inſects in their Talmud crawl.
Sometimes they 're equall'd, and ſometimes
prefer'd,
To what their Lawgiver from God declar'd.
There they the Godhead repreſent t'have wept,
To ſee *Jeruſalem*'s mighty Ruins heap'd;
Of *Beh'moth* and *Leviathan* maintain
Things ſo abſurd, as to repeat were pain:
Yet all this while they the true God have ſerv'd,
And to the Worſhip of no falſe one ſwerv'd:
None do their Slaughters or Adulteries blame,
And a warm Zeal does their griev'd Hearts inflame.
They faſt and pray, an angry God t'appeaſe,
And yet without Remorſe he hears and ſees:
None of their Propiti'ati'ons can prevail:
Which ſhews that the Moſaick Law does fail:
Or elſe ſome Sin their Nation has involv'd,
Through ſuch a Tract of Ages unabſolv'd.
It lies on them, either the Sin to name,
Or own 'twas ſlighting the *Meſſiah*, when
he came.

XVII. *'Tis prov'd that Jeſus is the Meſſias from the things foretold of the Meſſias.*

That the *Meſſiah*'s come already's plain;
That *Jeſus* was the true, we here maintain.
Of all that e're with that Pretence aroſe;
Or elſe, with whom, for ſuch, People did cloſe;
Not one of them has left a Sect behind,
By which what they deliver'd we may find.
Nor *Herod*, *Judas*, or *Barchoshebas*,
Who for the Chriſt with learned Men did paſs,
When *Adrian* did the Roman Empire ſway:
But down from Jeſus, to this very day

There

There have been, and throughout the World remain,
Thoſe who this *Jeſus* for the *Chriſt* maintain.
And many other ſigns I here might give,
Which were fortold, or People did receive,
Which as fulfill'd in *Jeſus* we believe.

(*g*) Pſal. 89.4. Iſa. 11. 10. Jer. 23. 5. Mat. 1. 1, *&c.* As that he was from (*g*) *David*'s Seed to ſpring:
(*h*) Iſa. 7. 14. Mat. 1. 18. That Him a (*h*) Virgin to the World ſhould bring;
(*i*) Mat. 1.20. He who betroth'd her this (*i*) from Heav'n was taught,
Or elſe the Nuptial Tie would not have ſought:
(*k*) Mic. 5. 2. Mat. 2. 1. In (*k*) *Beth'lem* he was born; and (*l*) *Galilee*
Did the firſt ſpreading of his Doctrine ſee.
(*l*) Iſa. 9. 1, 2, 9. Mat. 4. 12, 13. To every Mala'dy he did Cure afford,
(*m*) Iſ. 35. 5, 6. Mat. 11. 5, *&c.* (*m*) Sight to the Blind, Feet to the Lame reſtor'd:
But on one Sign alone I might rely,
Th'effect of which we at this day deſcry,
(*n*) Pſal. 2. 8. & 72. 8, 17. (*n*) *David*, (*o*) *Iſaiah*, (*p*) *Zacha'ry*, (*q*) *Hoſe* too,
(*o*) Iſa. 2. 2. & 49. 6. & 55. 4, 5, *&c.* Do in plain Prophecies expreſly ſhew,
That *Chriſt* ſhould not inſtruct the Jews alone;
But that all Nations ſhould his Precepts own;
(*p*) Zach. 2. 11. & 8. 20, *&c.* The Worſhip of falſe Gods, through him ſhould fail,
(*q*) Hoſ. 2. 23. And over far-ſpread Multitudes, the True prevail.
Untill he came falſe Worſhips did abound;
Thence forward by degrees they all loſt ground,
And in the Worſhip of One God were drown'd.
To *Jeſus* and his Follow'rs this we owe:
No ſuch effect from Jewiſh Doctors know.

(*r*) Hoſ. 2. 23. The People thence who were not (*r*) God's, became
Such, as for his, he with delight does name.
(*s*) Gen. 49. 1. This, the fulfilling *Jacob*'s (*s*) Bleſſing ſhows;
(*t*) Verſ. 9. That Civil Pow'r (*t*) fierce *Judah* ſhould not loſe,

Till

Till (*u*) *Shilo* came, whom Nati'ons ſhould obey: (*u*) Verſ. 10.
That this is the *Meſſiah* Jewiſh Doctors ſay.

XVIII. *An Anſwer to this, that ſome things are ſaid not to be fulfill'd.*

The hard'ned Jews here an Objection feign,
That many things ſtill unfulfill'd remain,
Belonging to the true *Meſſiah*'s Reign.
But thoſe things at the beſt are but obſcure,
And may as well another Senſe endure:
For theſe, we ought not Evidence to leave,
Such as ſhines forth in that which we believe;
The Holineſs of what this *Jeſus* taught;
The excellent Reward to Light he brought;
All things exhibited in Speech moſt clear;
By Miracles his Miſſion made appear.
To prove his Doctrine true theſe ſhould ſuffice:
But then for underſtanding Prophecies,
Which to ſeal'd Books we often find compar'd; Iſa. 29. 11.
Men with ſome helps from God ſhould be prepar'd, Dan. 12. 4, 9.
Of which who ſlight things plain, are juſtly bar'd.
They know beſides, that what makes their defence,
Is often render'd in a diff'rent Senſe:
If they make ſearch with an impartial Mind,
They ev'n their own Interpreters will find,
Who during their Captiv'ity had wrote,
Or much about the time that *Jeſus* taught,
In theſe agreeing with what Chriſtians thought:
If one obſerve how later theſe oppoſe,
Writing ſince Hatred againſt Jeſus roſe;
This a plain Biaſs to their party ſhows.
Ev'n they themſelves will without ſcruple own,
That Figures oft in Holy Writ are known,
The proper Senſe being diff'rent from the True;
Which we in num'rous Inſtances may view:

Thus God is mention'd coming from the Skies,
And oft describ'd with Mouth, Ears, Nose, and
Eyes.
Why should we not in the like way explain,
Some things foretold of the *Messiah*'s Reign?
As that the Wolf and Lamb, Leopard and Kid,
Lion and Fatling, in one Covert hid,
Should lie together in a peaceful way?
That suckling Infants should with Serpents play?
God's Mountain should above all others rise,
Thither should Strangers come to sacrifice?
Either the follow'ing or preceding words,
Where holy Penman, what's foretold, records,
Oft prove Conditi'on in the Sense imply'd:
Some Promises are thence the Jews deny'd,
Because they have not with the *Christ* comply'd.
Our Faith on this account they should not blame;
Since for the failure they must take the shame.
Some Promises we find without reserve;
If such they unaccomplish'd still observe,
What prejudice that yet their time's not past?
They hold *Messiah*'s Reign till all things end
(shall last.

Sect. XIX.
Answer to the Objection from the low Estate, and Death of Jesus.

Jesus his low Estate gives some Offence;
But the Objection is a vain pretence:
Almost throughout the Holy Writ 'tis seen,
God will debase the Proud, exalt the Mean.
Jacob past *Jordan* with his Staff alone,
But to return with Flocks and Herds was known.
Moses, a banish'd Shepherd, hardly far'd,
When in the burning Bush our God appear'd,
And him the Leader of his Flock declar'd.
David from Sheep, was to a Kingdom chose,
Many such Instances the Scripture shows.

We find it read of this long-promis'd King,
That he glad-Tidings to the Poor ſhould bring:
That he ſhould not in publick make a Noiſe,
Nor uſe Reproaches, but a gentle Voice: (heat,
Would cheriſh the bruis'd Reed, and that ſmall
Which in a ſnuff maintains a doubtful ſeat.
His Death, and other Ills which he did bear,
Should not his Credit in the leaſt impair.
God often in his wiſe Diſpoſe thinks fit
The Imp'ious in their Ravage to permit,
And force the Pious poorly to ſubmit.
The Sodomites with luſtful Fury hot,
Made a poor Fugitive of right'ous *Lot*.
Some have been ſlain, *Abel* by Parricide,
Iſaiah is by piece-meals ſaid t've di'd.
The *Maccabees* in Tortures did expire,
The Mother, with the Sons of her deſire.
Many ſuch Inſtances we here might bring;
'Tis written in thoſe Pſalms which th'*Hebrews* ſing,
Thy Servants Carcaſes a Prey did yeild
Unto the Birds o'th' Air, Beaſts of the Field: Pſalm 79. 2, 3.
Their Blood like Water in the Streets does flow,
And none dare give the Burial which they owe.
That the *Meſſias* was his Pow'r to gain,
Thro' many Troubles, and Death full of Pain,
Is from *Iſaiah* beyond queſti'on plain. Iſa. 53. 1.
'Who has what we report duly receiv'd?
'Who has the Pow'r of the moſt High believ'd?
'And that the rather, ſince before his Eye
'He grows up like a Plant wanting ſupply;
'A ſtarv'ling Root plac'd in a Sandy Ground,
'No Form or Comelineſs in him is found;
'Nor if you ſee him, can you Beauty find,
'Which thro' the Eye ſhould work upon the Mind.

'Of Men rejected, and expos'd to scorn;
'And many are the Sorrows by him born.
'Those who insult not, will their Faces hide;
'These exercise their Pity, others Pride:
'Yet he our Griefs does surely for us bear;
'Our's the Advantage, his the Sorrows are.
'In his wounds our Transgressions are descri'd,
'And our Iniquities have bruis'd his side.
'His Chastisement procures our setled Peace,
'And we are heal'd in what gives him Disease;
'We all, like silly Sheep, have gone astray,
'And each run bleating his own foolish way:
'For all our Aberrations he does pay.
'Silent he bears Afflicti'ons beyond thought,
'And like a Lamb is to the Slaughter brought;
'Or as a Sheep, before her Sheerers dumb,
'So does he to the bitter'st Suff'rings come.
'After a Pris'n and shameful Sentence past,
'With form of Law he's taken off at last.
'Yet after all, who's worthy to declare
'That life of Glory falling to his share?
'My Peoples Sins occasion'd his remove;
'Thence 'twas he went so soon to's place above.
'The wicked ins'olent with the Pow'r they have,
'Drive him to Death and the devouring Grave:
'Altho he never did commit a Wrong,
'Or e're impos'd with a deceitful Tongue.
'But tho God suffer'd all this to be done,
'Since he refus'd not for our Sins t'atone,
'But did himself a Victim for us pay;
'His Seed, his Life, shall never know decay;
'And thro' all Ages he our God shall please,
'After his Travel he shall sit at ease,
'With Joys the most sincere for ever crown'd,
'While numbers thro' him justifi'd are found.

'And

'And he diſcharg'd the Debt which on them lay,
'Him with the price of Victory I'le pay;
'Becauſe he did himſelf to Death reſign,
'As a Tranſgreſſor ſuffer'd Wrath Divine.
'For others Sins he did endure the pain,
'For them an Interceſſor does remain.

What other Prince or Prophet can they ſhew,
To whom his Character may be thought due?
What ſome of the late Jewiſh Writers feign,
As if 'twere of their Nation meant, is vain:
As if they, ſcatter'd over every Land,
Should many bring the Truth to underſtand,
By their Example, and diffuſive Speech,
The contrary to which the Scriptures teach:
Shewing that they have ſuffer'd nothing ill,
But for their Sins they worſe ſhould ſuffer ſtill.
The Ser'ies too of what's deliver'd here
Will not endure ſuch a ſtrain'd Senſe to bear:
The Prophet, rather God, does there declare,
My Peoples Sins of this th'occaſion are.
God's, or *Iſaiah*'s, People, were the Jews:
This then, That 'twas another ſuffer'd, ſhews.
Their ancient Jewiſh Rabbies have confeſt
Theſe things of the *Meſſiah* were expreſt:
With which ſome of the later being preſt,
Upon the Ficti'on of two Chriſts do fall;
One they indeed the Son of *Joſeph* call,
Who was to ſuffer Ills and Death at laſt;
Another for the Son of *David* paſt;
All things with him ſhould happily ſucceed:
This from parti'ality muſt needs proceed.
'Tis eaſier, and does better far agree
With what we in Prophetick Writings ſee;

T'acknowledge one who was to gain his Pow'r,
By Life of pain, and ſhame at the laſt hour;
Which we believe of *Jeſus* to be true:
If we were ſilent, This, the thing it ſelf ſhould ſhew.

XX.

Some *Jeſus* and his Doctrine disbeliev'd,
And as if they were good Men, who proſecuted him to death.
On an Opinion they had preconceiv'd,
That they who did firſt Oppoſiti'on raiſe,
Were Men for Probity deſerving Praiſe:
Chiefly the Prieſts who warmli'eſt did proceed,
Here I, for Satyr, no Invention need. (read,
Let them but their own Law and Prophets
There does in lively Characters appear,
What ſort of Men their Predeceſſors were;
As Men uncircumcis'd of Heart and Ear,
That with Lip-ſervice they to God draw nigh.
With Hearts which in Earth's furtheſt Corners lie.
Their Predeceſſors would have *Joſeph* ſlain,
Slav'ry was all the mitigation he could gain.
Of them they were whoſe Factions *Moſes* tir'd,
So much that he to end his Life deſir'd,
Whoſe Rod the Earth and Air were known t'obey,
At one dread ſhake the aſtoniſh'd Sea made way;
The Sea leſs deaf, and leſs diſturb'd than they.
Theſe were not ſatisfy'd with heav'nly Bread;
Belching up Quails ſtill wanted to be fed.
Such leaving *David* their Anointed King,
To his Rebellious Son their Homage bring.
They *Zacharias* at the Altar ſlew, (view,
The Victim of their Cruelty, the Prieſt did
Nor were their Prieſts leſs ſcandalouſly ill;
They by falſe Witneſs *Jeremy* would kill.

Lay-Piety indeed came in to's aid;
Yet him their Influence a Captive made,
Until themselves were forc'd to the like fate.
Is't said, while Jesus blest this Earthly State,
The Priests then living greater consci'ence made?
This fond Belief *Josephus* will disswade:
Read there, how great their Crimes, how strange their Woes:
That these were short of their Demerits he avows.
Nor can the *Sanhedrim* be better thought,
Since, as by th'History of those times we're taught,
Not choice, but great Men's Pow'r to th'Office brought.
Often who gave the most, promoted were,
Before for Life, then but from Year to Year.
What wonder then if People swell'd with Pride,
With Av'arice or Ambiti'on for their guide,
Should be with an insatiate Fury mov'd,
At one whose holy Life theirs so reprov'd?
Against him they could no Objection raise,
But what they always met who merited most Praise.
The Prophet *Micah* thus to Prison was brought,
For standing to the Truth which God had taught,
Against four hundred of a diff'rent thought.
Ahab against *Elias* that did urge, (purge,
From which the Priests put Christ himself to
That he was the disturber of that Rest,
Of which till then *Israel* had been possest.
Did Christ against the Jewish Temple preach?
For this they did condemn their *Jeremy*'s Speech.
Add farther, as their ancient Rabbies say,
Men shall be known in the *Messiah*'s day,

As bold as Dogs, as ſtubborn as the Aſs,
The Cruelty of Beaſts far to ſurpaſs.
And God himſelf who plainly did foreſee,
What in *Meſſiah*'s time the Jews would be,
Says a new People he for his will chuſe:
While from the Streets and Cities of the Jews;
Scarce one or two aſcend the holy Mount,
But he with Gentiles would fill up th'account.
Iſa. 8. 14. A Stone of ſtumbling, an offenſive Rock,
Shall Chriſt become to *Iſra'l*'s ſcatter'd Flock.
Pſal. 118. 22. But yet that Stone which the firſt Builders leave,
Others ſhall into the chief place receive.

XXI. *Anſwer to the Objection, that many Gods are worſhipp'd by Chriſtians.*

Two Calumnies do yet untouch'd remain,
With which the Jews Chriſti'anity would ſtain,
Firſt, That we worſhip many Gods they feign.
But here with malice obvi'ous to diſcern,
A Doctrine oppoſite to their's they turn.
Th'Objection equally affects the Jew,
As does their *Philo* evidently ſhew.
He three *Hypoſtaſes* in *God* does name,
Unto him adds his *Word* which made this frame;
Who otherwiſe than Men from's Father came;
On the belief he of a Third does fall,
Him does Embaſſador, or Angel call,
To whom he does aſſign the care of all.
Moſes, Nehmanni's Son, with him agrees;
And in their *Cabaliſts* the like one ſees.
They God diſtinguiſh as a threefold Light;
Some have the Names of which the Chriſti'ans write:
The *Father*, *Son*, or *Word*, and *Spirit Divine*.
Here what's conſeſt by all the Jews to joyn;

That

That Spirit known the Prophets to inspire,
They do as something increate, admire,
Distinguish'd still from him by whom 'twas sent:
And so of what by *Schechina* is meant.
That Force Divine should in the *Christ* reside,
Which they call Wisdom, many Jews confide:
Whence the Chaldæan Par'aphrast does accord
With Christians, calling him th'Almighty's Word.
David, *Isaiah*, with more, taught of Heav'n,
The Name of *God* and *Lord*, to him have giv'n.

XXII. *And that the Humane Nature is ador'd.*

Another Imputation here they lay,
That we to a meer Creature Worship pay:
But this with mighty ease is wip'd away;
Since we to Christ no other Honour give,
Than what we in the *Psalms* his due perceive.
The second, *David Kimchi* thus applies; Psalm 2.
Finding King *David* not so high to rise,
In *Christ* the Character at large descries:
Yet none did more than he Christ'anity oppose. Psalm 110.
The hundred and tenth *Psalm* which this yet fuller shows;
Must needs be thought of the *Messiah* meant.
That which some Jews of later time invent
Of *David*, and of *Hezekiah* some,
Is but their Malice boyling up in scum.
The *Psalm* is *David*'s, as th'Inscripti'on shews;
Where then King *David* calling, *Lord*, one views;
Can it be thought, this to himself he'd use?
Or *Hezekiah* coming from his Line,
When yet he did in nothing him out-shine?
Abr'am no Priestly Character possest, Gen.
And him *Melchisedec* devoutly blest,
As one whom a more sacred Order did invest.

Pſal. 110. 2. That which we added by the *Pſalmiſt* know,
'*A Rod of Strength ſhall out of Sion go,*
'*And make his diſtant Foes his Proweſs ſee,*
Does evidently with the *Chriſt* agree.
Nor did the ancient Jews e're differ here,
And this in their old Paraphraſts is clear.
So great their Probity was fully known,
Who for the *Chriſt*, the *Nazarite*, did own,
That we for this might credit them alone;
As well as *Moſes* is by Jews believ'd,
In what himſelf alone declares from God receiv'd.
But more, and ſtranger Arguments, maintain,
That Pow'r Supream this *Jeſus* did obtain;
That many ſaw him come to Life again:
That he was ſeen when to the Hev'ns he paſt:
That out of Men he raging Dæmons caſt:
Diſeaſes cur'd by his tremendous Name: (came,
And that the Gift of Tongues t'his Follow'ers
Which he had promis'd for his Empire's ſign;
His Scepter too, that is, his Word Divine,
From *Sion* went devoid of Humane Aid,
And did the Limits of the Earth invade,
People, and Kings, its ſacred force obey'd:
Exactly anſw'ering what the Pſalmiſt told.
Their *Cabaliſts* a middle Nature hold,
Between the *Higheſt*, and the Humane Mind;
For whom the name of *Enoch*'s Son they find;
With a much lower Pow'r to him aſſign'd.
To him how much more juſtly this we yeild,
Who has himſelf with ſo much Light reveal'd?
Againſt the *Father*'s Pow'r, this does not make;
Since we confeſs he this from him did take:
1 Cor. 15. 24. To him at th'end of all it muſt return;
And we his Honour brightned hence diſcern:

Unto

Unto more subtile Questions to descend,
Were but the Readers time in waste to spend:
These things I think may be enough to prove,
That no Objection any Skill can move,
Argues the Doctrines which this *Jesus* taught,
Either absurd, or impious to be thought.
What hinders then, but all Men should imbrace
Those Doctrines, which such Miracles did grace,
Which Precepts of such Sanctity commend,
With a Reward so glorious in the end?
Whoever this for his Live's Rule does take,
But Questi'ons more particular would make;
Must search those sacred Books, which we maintain,
The whole of our Religi'on to contain.
That on Mens Minds these their due force may gain.
We ought with fervent Zeal that God t'implore,
Whom Jews, and we, with holy Fear adore;
That he to them would open the clos'd Door;
That they may feel the beams of Light Divine,
In their most inward Parts serenely shine:
That that warm Pray'r may efficac'ious prove,
Utter'd for them by *Christ* when he did hence remove.

XXIII.
A Conclusion of this part, with a Prayer for the Jews.

Lib. VI.

A Refutation of Mahometism. Its rise.

SInce now with that Religi'on we engage,
Which *Mahomet* set up in a blind Age;
It may be fit to count those Judgments here,
Drawn down by Christians e're he did appear.
While Persecuti'ons did the Church enclose,
More florid, like the branching Palm, it rose:
Piety sparkled through its humble State,
Grew cold, and stiff, when favour'd by the Great.
When *Constantine*, and others of like pow'r,
Pal'd in and cherish'd this Celestial Flow'r;
The Church became a Garden of delight,
And thither humane Honours did invite;
The World came crowding in at the large Gate;
And it might seem to admit of some debate,
Whether the State was in the Church, or Church in State.
Secular Int'rest then began to sway,
The stronger Princes on the weak did prey,
Boundless Ambiti'on urging them to Wars;
Sometimes the Bishops were the Trumpeters:
Often the Clergy's Quarrels for the See,
Divided Men under one Politie; (Priest;
The Laymen's Lives be'ing Off'rings for the
When by the rout o'th'one the Tumults ceast,
In curi'ous Questi'ons they spun out that Ease,
And study'd more themselves than God to please:
They chose, like *Adam* tempted by his Wife,
The Tree of Knowledg for the Tree of Life.

Reli-

Religi'on, fram'd by God for common uſe;
Became a Sci'ence, and an Art abſtruſe;
Vain Affectati'on of things moſt ſublime,
Like them who did to build proud *Babel* climb,
To Diſcord, and divided Tongues did draw:
Which, when the thus confounded Vulgar ſaw,
Scarce knowing where the Streams of Life did lie,
The very Scriptures they, as tainted, fly:
Then ſpecious Rites engroſt Religi'ons Name;
Inſtead of Piety that Heav'n-born Flame,
Juda'iſm one would have thought again return'd:
As if the Mind were but the leaſt concern'd,
Bodily Exerciſe Religi'on ſeem'd,
With Zeal in crying up a Man, or ſide eſteem'd.
Religi'on then dwindled to outward ſhows,
Many were Chriſti'ans call'd, but few were choſe.
At this did God juſt Indignati'on ſhew,
From *Scythi'a*, thence, and *Germany*, he drew
Legions of barb'rous Enemies, who came
Like Inundati'ons o're the Chriſti'an Name.
They who ſurviv'd this ſo devouring loſs,
Not being purg'd from their contracted droſs,
Sank under *Mah'met* fighting 'gainſt the Croſs:
Arabi'a ſaw the Firſt-fruits of that Weed,
Which ſprung up thick, and choak'd the ſacred Seed;
In words it often ſuits the Chriſtian Life,
With it in truth nothing is more at ſtrife:
The *Saracens* theſe Precepts firſt obey'd,
Who a defecti'on from *Heracli'us* made,
Theſe did *Arabi'a*, *Syr'ia*, *Paleſtine*, invade;
Ægypt and *Perſi'a* felt their dread Alarms,
From *Africa* to *Spain* they wafted o're their Arms:
Tho others them did warmly entertain,
The *Turks* did the moſt equal Wars maintain,

And

And after mutu'al various chances paſt,
They ſtruck an undivided League at laſt.
Then, a Conformity of Manners, brought
The *Turks* to cloſe with what the others taught:
Friendſhip prevail'd where Force did fruitleſs prove,
So much more pow'rful is the bond of Love;
Of Empire with the *Turks* remain'd the Seat,
Taking in Partners, they became more great:
Cities of *Aſ'ia*, and renowned *Greece*,
They ſoon compell'd to render up their Keys;
Their proſp'rous Arms in *Hungary* were crown'd,
And they broke through the ſtubborn *German* Bound.

II. *The Foundation of Mahometiſm, concerning not enquiring into Religion, overthrown.*

This Doctrine, ſet up to encourage Fights,
Is flaringly dreſt out with gaudy Rites;
Their Books, call'd Holy, from the vulgar hid,
All free enquiry after Truth forbid:
Nothing more juſtly may Suſpiti'on breed,
Than that they are prohibited to read:
Who would not think that an adult'rate Ware,
For which who puts it off takes mighty care,
That none ſhall view the purchaſe he has made,
This being the conditi'on of the Trade?
All Men indeed can't equally be brought
To underſtand all Objects of their thought;
Pride, Affectati'on, Cuſtom, may miſguide;
But that the way of Truth ſhould be deny'd
To them who ſeek it without by-reſpect,
Themſelves and all things elſe to God ſubject,
With this the Aid Divine warmly implore;
Would cloud the Goodneſs of Him we adore.
And ſince a judging Pow'r adorns the Mind,
What of that Pow'r can we more worthy find,

But

But that thoſe things ſhould exerciſe it moſt,
Through Ignorance of which Eternal Life is loſt?

III. *Proof againſt Mahometans from the ſacred Books of Jews and Chriſtians, and that they are not corrupted.*

Moſes ſo-pow'rful with his wondrous Rod,
Mahometans confeſs was ſent from God;
This they of Jeſus own, nor ſtick to ſay,
That holy Men firſt ſpread about his way:
Yet in their *Alch'ran* many things do lie,
Diff'ring from *Moſes* and the Chriſti'an Verity.
Here, that I may but one Example name,
That on the Croſs Chriſt dy'd, Scriptures proclaim;
That the third day he came to Life agen,
Without deluſion, ſeen of many Men:
O'th'other ſide by *Mahomet*, 'tis ſaid,
That he was privately to Heav'n convey'd,
Upon the Croſs th'Effigies only laid.
The Death of Chriſt he plainly thus denies,
And would not have the Jews believe their Eyes:
Th'Objection can no other Anſwer bear,
But that the Books remain not what they were,
The contrary to which we've made appear. Vid. lib. 3.
If any this againſt their *Alch'ran* urge,
The bare denial would be thought to purge;
But they for that can ne're ſuch proofs pretend,
As have been ſhewn on holy Writ t'attend:
As that it ſoon throughout the World did paſs,
Not in a ſingle Tongue (as th'*Alch'ran* was)
Faithfully kept by each divided Sect,
Who one anothers Frauds muſt needs detect.
Chriſt's welcome Promiſe, enter'd by St. *John*,
To ſend the *Comforter* when he was gone,
Mahometans ſuppoſe t'have curtail'd been,
That ſomething there of *Mahomet* was ſeen;

But

But that the Christi'ans to suppress this Light,
Blotted the passage of malicious slight;
On which this Question may an Answer need,
Was't after *Mahomet*; or did precede?
After it could not be, since then were found
Copies dispersit throughout the World t'abound,
The *Greek*, the *Syri'ac*, *Arabick*, were known,
Æthi'opic, and in *Latin* more than one:
But in that place these all are known t'agree,
Nor can we the least vari'ous Vers'ion see:
No cause of change before that could be thought;
None could foresee what would by him be taught.
Tho nothing contrary to Christ he brought;
Who can of those who follow Christ believe,
They should the Books of *Mahomet* receive
Before what *Moses* and the Hebrew Prophets leave.
Suppose on neither side a Writing were,
That might what Christ or *Mah'met* taught declare,
Reason would teach that that for Christ's should pass,
Which that esteem among the Christians has,
For *Mahomet*'s that, which so his Foll'wers take.

IV. *A Comparison of Jesus, and of Mahomet.*

Of both now the Comparison let's make,
While we the Adjuncts and Affecti'ons view,
Whence which deserves the pref'rence we may
First for the Authors; th'other side agree, (shew.
Men did in Jesus that Messiah see,
Of whom the Promise in the Law did pass, (has,
The Word of God's his Name; which *Mah'met*
Vary'd to *Wisdom*, and the *Filial Mind*:
That he no Earthly Father had, is joyn'd;
While *Mahomet* was got the common way,
As the most zealous of his Foll'wers say,

Long

Long was rapaci'ous, ever too inclin'd,
To sati'ate his warm lust with Woman-kind.
Mahomet owns Jesus t'ascend the Skies,
Under his Tomb himself a Relick lies;
Who cannot see which most we ought to prize?
Compare their Deeds: ev'n *Mahomet* does own,
That Christ t'endue the Blind with Sight was known;
To Cripples he the use of Feet did give,
And made the Dead with Breath recall'd to live.
Th'other for Miracles urges Alarms,
And thinks to prove his Mission by his Arms:
Yet they who after him his Rules imbibe,
What they call Miracles to him ascribe;
But either they from human Art might move,
As what is story'd of th'attendant Dove,
Or such as by no Witnesses they prove;
As that a Camel spake to him by Nights,
Or what against all Sense absurdly fights,
As that upon him part o'th'Moon was found,
Which he return'd to fill a starry round.
Who will not say, that when Disputes arise,
That Law is to be chose where one descrys
That clearest proof of sacred Sanction lies.
Let us observe what sort of Men were they,
Who first took up the one, or t'other way.
Christi'ans the World, Men fearing God, did
Of Innocence unsully'd from below: (know,
And with God's Goodness how can it agree,
To suffer such to drown in Error's Sea,
Cheated by Words of the most speci'ous shew,
Or Deeds seeming miraculous to view?
Who first for *Mahomet* their Notions chang'd,
Were Robbers, even from Humanity estrang'd.

V. *And of their Deeds.*

VI. *Of them who first receiv'd either Religion.*

VII. *Of the means by which either Law was propagated.*

Mark then the manner, in which each was found
To propagate the Rule he did propound:
Christ's was not spread by Miracles alone,
Grew by their Suff'rings who the Cross did own,
Neither of these *Mahometans* can boast,
Miracles wrought, Lives for their Doctrines lost:
But their Religi'on with their Arms encreast,
A meer accessi'on unto them at best;
Their mighty Empire and in Wars success,
Their Teachers as the pow'rful Motives press,
Than which can nothing more fallacious be:
Them to oppose the Ethnick Rites we see,
Which *Persi'ans*, *Macedoni'ans*, *Romans*, spread,
Conquest attending where they Armies led,
Their thriving Limits stretch't out vastly far:
The *Turks* were oft improsperous in War;
By Sea and Land how often were they beat?
How forc'd in *Spain* to quit their ancient seat?
What is so mutable a doubtful Chance,
Which now the Good, now does the Bad advance,
Can be no standard by which one may shew,
Which is the false Religion, which the true?
And that the less, since we can rarely find,
That they the Justice of their Arms will mind,
These often they injuriously extend,
Where they no Provocation can pretend,
Unless that they would strive this way t' enlarge
The bounds of Truth committed to their charge;
Thus hood-wink'd Zeal should for those Deeds atone,
Than which nothing's more irreligi'ous known:
God's Worship in the Will is known to lie,
Which whoso forces, takes away the Tie;
This may be wrought upon by gentle ways;
'Tis not of Will when one by force obeys:

Where

Where ever Proselytes such means do gain,
'Tis not that they believe, but poorly feign,
To shun the present, or impending pain:
Who does by Violence Assent compel,
Therein the weakness of his Cause does tell;
Yet they themselves take this pretence away,
For many People subject to their sway,
Have an Indulgence for their former way.
Nor do *Mahometans* scruple to own,
Men may be sav'd trusting in Christ alone.

VIII. *Of the Precepts respectively.*

Let's next the Precepts mutually compare:
One teaches greatest Injuries to bear,
And take our Enemies into our care;
Th'other usurps upon the Right divine,
While it Retaliation does enjoyn.

Vengeance is mine, &c.

The Nuptial Band one renders ever fast,
And checks ev'ry occasi'on of distaste,
The other makes it but on pleasure last:
The Husband does what he would have his Wife,
Leading with her an undivided life;
By his Example teaches single Love,
More, there allow'd, to lust Incentives prove.
This calls Religi'on inward to the Mind,
That it may bring forth Fruits worthy Mankind:
That does its force in Circumcision spend,
With other things which to no good do tend.
This yeilds the temp'rate use of Meat and Wine,
There 'tis prohibited to eat of Swine;
Wine too, the Gift of God, is there deny'd,
Tho thence, provided Moderati'on guide,
Body and Mind are with fresh Spir'its supply'd.
No wonder if before the perfect Law,
Men Childish Rudiments as previous saw:
When from the Sun God did the Clouds withdraw,

And Men its open Glories might discern,
Preposterous 'twere to Figures to return:
Since Christ's Religion Men must perfect own,
What ground for adding to it can be shown?

IX. *Answer to the Mahometans Objection against the Son of God.*

Warmly *Mahometans* urge in dispute,
That to the Godhead we a Son impute;
When yet a Wife was never to him joyn'd:
As if the name of Son in God sublim'd,
Something far more divine we did not find,
Than th'acceptation when to Man confin'd:
Besides a Female partner of his Love (prove,
Would much more worthy of the Godhead
Than many things which *Mahomet* has told,
As that his Hand is beyond measure cold,
Experienc'd by himself who did it hold:
That in a Chair he's carry'd up and down,
With other things which Reason must disown.
We, who the Son of God, blest Jesus call,
On an Idea no less sacred fall,
Than he, where he the *Word* of *God* does name:
And as an Offspring from his Mind it came.
Add here the Spirit supply'd a Father's force,
A Virgin bore him against Nature's course:
Him God did visibly to Heav'n translate;
These things does *Mahomet* himself relate;
All which evince that in peculiar way,
That he's the Son of God, we may, and ought to say.

X. *Many absurd things in the Mahometan Book.*

Beyond due bounds it would this Treatise swell,
Did we of all those idle Fables tell,
Which in the *Alchoran* are known t'abound;
As that some Angels, while the Cups went round,

And

And a fair Virgin sat attentive by,
Taught her a Song with which to mount the Sky;
That oft she thither went with this inspir'd,
At last unto an higher flight being fir'd,
There caught by God was turn'd to a fixt Star;
That this was *Venus*, Pattern to the fair.
That while the World liv'd in a single House,
The Elephantine Dung brought forth a Mouse:
And that a Lions Breath produc'd a Cat:
Nor, surely, less ridiculous is that,
Where he of a scape-Ram does Wonders tell,
Hung in the middle between Heav'n and Hell,
Which carries on its back Death's murd'ring stores;
And of excerning Banquets through the pores:
That each should have his Flocks of Womenkind,
For his continu'd lusts, in Heav'n assign'd:
Their Faith in these we must a Judgment think,
Through which into Stupidity they sink;
Since chiefly, the bright beams of Light Divine
About them with commanding Lustre shine.

This Argument I need no farther press.
Here not to Strangers only I address;
But unto them, as much, who Christ profess.
What's said already let's to use apply;
Follow what's good, and what is noxious fly;
While we with spotless Hands invoke his Aid,
Who things unseen and seen equally made;
Assur'd that all things in his Conduct share,
And not a Sparrow falls without his Care:
Him let's not fear who can the Body kill,
But who can Soul and Body crush at will.
Nor must we in the Father only trust,
To place the like in Jesus is but just;

XI. *An Application to Christians, who from what is before said are admonish'd of their Duty.*

Who has obtain'd the only Name on Earth,
Through which the ſtate of Happineſs has Birth;
And yet in vain we call or God, or Lord,
Unleſs we yeild Obedience to their Word;
Him to a Life of Glory God will raiſe,
Who does his Will, not him who loudly prays.
Chriſt's holy Doctrine let's a Treaſure hold,
Exceeding far that valu'd triflle, Gold;
Oft read thoſe Books which ſhew what we believe,
Where none can be deceiv'd, who don't themſelves deceive.
More faithful, more inſpir'd the Pen-men were,
Than that they'd neceſſary Truths forbear,
Or wrap them up in any envi'ous Cloud;
Minds we muſt bring obſequiouſly bow'd,
Which if we do, our God will nothing ſhrow'd,
By us to be believ'd, or hop'd, or done;
He'l perfect this his Work in us begun,
Will cheriſh and excite his growing Grace,
A pledg of what ſhall crown our finiſh'd Race.
From imitating Pagans let's abſtain;
Firſt in their worſhipping of Idols vain,
Nothing in truth but Names ill Spir'its brought in,
To make Mens very Worſhip prove their Sin:
If of their Rites held ſacred we partake,
Chriſt's Sacrifice to us we fruitleſs make.
Next let's not live in their licenti'ous way,
Who ſervilely the Law of Fleſh obey.
Chriſtians ſhould to far nobler things aſpire,
Beyond ev'n what the Jewiſh Laws require,
Or the proud Phar'ſees, ſeeming to riſe higher;
Their Right'ouſneſs lay but in outward things,
Th'obſerving which to Heav'n none ever brings:

Heart-

Heart-Circumcision, not the work of hand,
With true obedience to Divine Command,
Are things in which we shall accepted stand:
God's Spirit must without resistance move,
And raise a living Faith working by Love:
This shews true *Isr'aelites*, those mystick Jews,
Who sing God's Praises, and whom he does chuse.
Diff'rence of Meats, Sabbaths, and holy Days,
Are shadows scatter'd by *Messiah*'s Rays,
In him we the Completi'on of those Types
should praise.
Mahometism may this t'our Thoughts suggest;
That in the Christian Law it is expresst,
That after Jesus many should arise,
Who should pretend their Missi'on from the Skies.
But tho an Angel should from Heav'n descend,
Did he another Doctrine recommend,
Than what Christ taught, and Miracles maintain'd,
We should reject, and think his Errand feign'd.
In vari'ous ways God heretofore did speak
To them who did his Will sincerely seek;
At last to such his only Son he sent,
Who did his Father fully represent,
The perfect Image of paternal Light,
Which in the bright Reflecti'on feasts the Sight,
The Lord and Maker of the World's great Scene,
Whose Influ'ence still throughout the whole is
seen.
When for our Sins he had Atonement made,
He was immediately to Heav'n convey'd,
Where the offici'ous Angels give him place,
Whom with a Throne of Glory God does grace.
Such be'ing the Author of the Law w'obey,
For something still more noble should we stay?

On this occaſi'on we ſhould call to Mind,
What are the Arms Chriſt's Souldiers have aſſign'd,
Not ſuch as bloody *Mahomet* enjoyn'd;
Such as the Spirit'ual Warfare does require,
To raze thoſe holds to which our Luſts retire,
Which to ſubvert God's Law boldly aſpire.
Faith would a Shield invulnerable lend,
'Gainſt all thoſe fi'ry Darts the Dæmons ſend;
A right'ous Life's a well-wrought Coat of Mail,
Which in no Circumſtance is known to fail:
The hope of Happineſs an Helmet proves,
Which danger from the threatned head removes:
Inſtead of Sword, the ſacred Writ we find,
Piercing the cloſe Receſſes of the Mind.
Such Concord ſhould unite each Chriſti'an Heart,
As Chriſt bequeath'd when he from hence did part.
We ſhould not many for our Guides receive;
But him, the only One from God, believe.
Baptiz'd into his Name all Chriſtians are;
Wherefore of Sects and Schiſms we ſhould beware,
His ſeamleſs Coat 'tis impious to tear:
And that into this fault we may not fall,
Th'Apoſtle's Dictates we ſhould oft recal;
Who bids each Man be temperately wiſe,
According to the meaſure God ſupplies,
T'another's Weakneſs Tenderneſs to ſhow,
That we, as in one Body, may together grow.
If more than others one has underſtood,
In their Inſtructi'on let him make it good;
If yet they can't arrive to the true Senſe,
Still hope that God will farther Light diſpence.

I'th'in-

I'th'int'rim let's act up to what we know;
Our knowledg is imperfect while below,
We shall be fill'd above where the clear Fountains flow.
Each in particular should have a care,
Not t'hide the Talent fallen to his share;
But to lay out the utmost of his Pow'r,
That Men may close with Christ in happy hour;
For this, as well as good Advice to give,
He an Example of his Rules must live;
That of the Master they may well conceive,
Who see what Men in him alone believe;
And they that Law may value as the best,
Whose Purity is in their Lives expresst.

If any thing which I have offer'd here,
Does under a good Character appear,
Let God, from whom it came, the Praises bear:
And let the Sense of humane Frailty move,
At least to pardon, what you don't approve;
Think too of time and place when this came forth,
Rather an *Embr'yo*, than a perfect Birth.

FINIS.

Virgil's *Fourth* ECLOGUE
faithfully tranſlated.

SIcilian Muſe! let's take a nobler flight;
Shrubs and low *Sylvan* Scenes can't all delight;
Yet if a Grove our Verſes celebrate,
That ſhall become worthy a Conſul's State:
Time, i'th'appointed round, preſents that Age,
Which the *Cumæan Sybil* did preſage.
The Virgin now viſits the Earth again,
And peaceful *Saturn* brings his happy Reign;
While a-new Offspring comes down from above:
May chaſt *Lucina* but propiti'ous prove,
And with a gentle hand forward that Birth,
Which is to purge the Iron from the Earth,
No Metal to allay pure Gold be'ing known:
This is the time *Apollo* mounts the Throne.

Vid. *Grot.* lib. 4. Sect. 9.

SIcilides Muſæ! paulo majora canamus.
Non omnes arbuſta juvant, humileſq; myricæ.
Si canimus ſylvas, ſylvæ ſint Conſule dignæ.
Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas;
Magnus ab integro ſæclorum vertitur ordo.
Jam redit & Virgo, redeunt Saturnia Regna:
Jam nova Progenies Cœlo dimittitur alto.
Tu modo naſcenti puero, quo ferrea primum
Deſinet, ac toto ſurget gens aurea Mundo,
Caſta fave Lucina: tuus jam regnat Apollo.

This *Pollio!* shall thy Consulship adorn,
This Age's Grace shall during that be born:
Hence shall the joyful *Epocha* begin,
While thou presidest is the fall of Sin;
No tracts of former Guilt shall stay behind,
Nor shall it longer terrify Mankind.
He shall ascend unto a Life Divine,
Where mingled with the Gods the Hero's shine;
Himself conspicuous above the rest:
The Universe shall under him be blest,
And find the Father in the Son expreſt.
The unforc'd Earth shall ready Tribute bring,
At the Nativity of thee its King;
The blushing Berry with green Ivy twin'd,
Th' *Egyptian* Bean, with Herbs of sov'raign kind:
The Pails with fatning Goat's Milk shall run o're,
Nor shall the Herds fear when the Lions roar.

Teq; adeo decus hoc ævi, te Consule, inibit
Pollio, & incipient magni procedere menses.
Te duce, siqua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,
Irrita perpetuâ solvent formidine terras.
Ille Deûm vitam accipiet, Divisq; videbit
Permistos Heroas, & ipse videbitur illis;
Pacatumq; reget Patriis Virtutibus Orbem.
At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu,
Errantes hederas passim cum baccare tellus,
Mistaq; ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.
Ipsæ lacte domum referent distenta Capellæ
Ubera: nec magnos metuent armenta Leones.

All

All ſorts of new-ſprung Flowers thy Cradle ſtrew,
Courting thy Infant Tears before the Morning Dew.
Serpents ſhall die, the Poiſon's force decay,
And wild *Aſſyrian* Roſes cloath the way.
But when the Hero's Praiſes, and the Deeds,
Th'enlightned Youth of his dread Father reads,
And knows the grounds from whence true Fame proceeds;
Corn ſhall enrich the Fields where none did ſow,
And chearing Grapes on common Buſhes grow,
From the hard Oak ſhall roſcid Hony flow.
Yet there ſome remnants of old Fraud ſhall be,
Which ſhall again provoke to try the Sea,
A num'rous Neighbourhood with Walls t'encloſe,
And vex the paſſive Earth with fur'wing Ploughs:
Of a new *Tiphys* Stories ſhall be told,
Another *Argos* ſhall cull'd Hero's hold;
Freſh Wars ſhall be begun, another *Troy*
Shall an *Archilles* feel ſent to deſtroy.

Ipſa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores:
Occidet & Serpens & fallax herba veneni
Occidet: Aſſyrium vulgo naſcetur amomum.
At ſimul Heroum laudes & facta parentis
Jam legere, & quæ ſit poteris cognoſcere virtus;
Molli paulatim flaveſcet campus ariſtâ,
Incultiſq; rubens pendebit ſentibus uvæ,
Et duræ quercus ſudabunt roſcida mella.
Pauca tamen ſuberunt veteris veſtigia fraudis,
Quæ tentare Thetin ratibus, quæ cingere muris
Oppida, quæ jubeant telluri infindere ſulcos:
Alter erit tum Tiphys, & altera quæ vehat Argo
Delectos Heroas: erunt etiam altera bella,
Atq; iterum ad Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles.

But

But when thou ſhalt in Years become mature,
The Sailer ſhall no more rough Seas endure;
No Ships ſhall coaſt about for Foreign Ware,
All things within it ſelf each Realm ſhall bear,
Plough-ſhares no more ſhall tear the fertile ground,
No Pruning-hooks the bleeding Vines ſhall wound;
The lab'ring Ox ſhall from the Yoak be free;
Nor ſhall we Wool dy'd with falſe Colours ſee;
A nat'ral Purple, or becoming Red
Shall, as he ſtalks along, the Ram beſpread;
Lambs a more orient Red ſhall ſweetly ſtain.
Such times as theſe the ſteady Fates ordain,
Working th'agreeing Links of the ſure Chain.
Enjoy thy ſacred Honours now in peace, (creaſe!
Thou darling Son o'th'Gods! *Jove*'s great en-
See! how the tott'ring World expects thy hand,
Made to ſupport the Heav'ns, the Sea, and Land.

Hinc ubi jam firmata virum te fecerit ætas,
Cedet & ipſe mari vector, nec nautica pinus
Mutabit merces: omnis feret omnia tellus.
Non raſtros patietur humus, non vinea falcem:
Robuſtus quoq; jam tauris juga ſolvet arator;
Nec varios diſcet mentiri lana colores:
Ipſe ſed in pratis aries jam ſuave rubenti
Murice, jam croceo mutabit vellera luto;
Sponte ſuâ ſandyx paſcentes veſtiet agnos.
Talia ſecla ſuis dixerunt currite fuſis,
Concordes ſtabili fatorum numine Parcæ.
Aggredere ô magnos (aderit jam tempus) honores,
Chara Deûm ſoboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.
Aſpice, convexo nutantem pondere mundum,
Terraſq; tractuſq; maris, Cœlumq; profundum.

Nature

Nature, behold! puts on a chearful Face,
Finding thy Season rowling on apace.
Oh! that my Life and Spirit might suffice,
To praise the Glories to which thou shalt rise:
While full of thee I should not fear to vie
With *Orpheus*, were the Muse his Mother by;
Nor *Linus*, tho *Apollo* did inspire
His raptur'd Son with all his holy Fire.
Should *Pan*, ev'n in his own *Arcadia* sing,
Arcadia should to me the Lawrel bring.
By Smiles the knowledg of thy Mother gain,
Thou perfect Recompence of all her Pain!
Learn by the Smiles: where Parents don't rejoyce,
No God, or Goddess made that House their choice.

Aspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia sæclo.
O mihi tam longæ maneat pars ultima vitæ,
Spiritus & quantum sat erit tua dicere facta.
Non me carminibus vincet nec Thracius Orpheus,
Nec linus: huic mater quamvis atq; huic pater
Orphei Calliopea, Lino formosus Apollo: (*adsit:*
Pan Deus Arcadiâ mecum si judice certet,
Pan etiam Arcadiâ dicet se judice victum.
Incipe parve puer risu cognoscere matrem:
Matri longa decem tulerant fastidia menses.
Incipe, parve puer, qui non risere parentes,
Nec Deus hunc mensâ, Dea nec dignata cubili est.

APPEN-

APPEN

APPENDIX.

Concerning Prophcies and Predictions, particularly the *Sibyls*, and the foregoing Translation of what *Virgil* rehearses out of the *Cumæan Sibyls* Verses. Προφητείας μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτε. *Despise not Prophesyings*: Or rather, reckon not as if there are no true Prophecies. 1 Thes. 5. 20.

CHAP. I.

Of the Importance of Prophecies for confirmation of the Christian Religion; how the Sibyline Verses were preserved, and the Primitive Christians justified in their Appeals to them. Their Authority confirm'd, by a Passage cited as St. Paul's, *by* Clement *of* Alexandria.

OF all the Arguments excellently urg'd by *Grotius*, and but enervated by my Rythms, there is none which seems more undeniably to enforce the belief of a Deity, and the Religion which Christ Jesus taught Man-

Mankind, than the Evidence that there have been, at leaſt in ſome Ages of the World, ſuch Predictions as have manifeſted a fore-knowledg of thoſe future Events, of which it was impoſſible to have the leaſt intimation from any Cauſe, or Sign, appearing only by natural Light; and that ſuch an one as the bleſſed Jeſus, had been fore-ſhewn, and was accordingly expected, about that time when he firſt convers'd among Men.

Numbers not injudicious, may be impos'd upon with appearances ſeemly miraculous, either by a Confederacy, ſlight of hand, or natural Magick, in applying the occult Qualities of things new and ſtrange.

But it muſt evidently be beyond all humane Power, to know future things in their remote Cauſes, the Cauſes themſelves not exiſting till many Ages after; nay, where the Cauſes act arbitrarily, and conſequently the Effects are wholly contingent.

Whether the Inſtruments of conveying to Mankind the notices of ſuch things, were actuated by good or bad Spirits, is not of any Conſequence here; ſince if they were bad, it ſhews the influence of a ſuperiour Being, which makes the very Devils ſubſervient to that Power, which was to deſtroy their Kingdom.

And it cannot but be look'd upon as a great Mercy and Providence of God, that he not only
Acts 14. 15. left witneſs of himſelf among the Jews, in thoſe Prophecies, which ſufficiently pointed out the Time, Place, Perſon, and Character of the *Meſſiah*. But that the Gentiles might have no pretence that theſe were Juggles, and a meer Conſpiracy againſt their ancient and eſtabliſh'd Rites,

he

he ſo ordered it, That the Roman Capitol ſhould become a Sanctuary, and Depoſitory of theſe Divine Truths; That there the Sibylline Writings, which deſcribe that pacific Prince, who was to be born of a Virgin, ſo clearly, that thence is now taken the main Objection againſt their Authority; ſhould be preſerved with that care, which might prevent all manner of ſcruples with unbiaſs'd minds, againſt thoſe mighty Teſtimonies to Chriſtianity.

To thoſe therefore the Primitive Fathers, (a) *Juſtin Martyr*, (b) *Clement* of *Alexandria*, (c) *Tertullian*, and *Origen*, even the laſt of which was born within the ſecond Century, appeal'd in their Diſputes with the Heathens, or Apologies for themſelves. (d) *Celſus* his Objection, That the Chriſtians had inſerted many, and blaſphemous things into the *Sibyls* Books, is ſo far from an Objection that ought to weigh with us; that it is a Confirmation of our Faith, and that thoſe Writings contained ſuch things of one to be born into the World, as the Heathens accounted it Blaſphemy to aſcribe to any but their Gods, or the great *Jove*, or *Jehova*.

Origen's Challenge, for *Celſus* to ſhew what the Chriſtians had inſerted, not being anſwered, were of it ſelf a ſufficient diſproof of this Calumny: but 'tis ſtrange it ſhould be taken up by Chriſtians now, eſpecially by the Learned (e) *Iſaac Voſſius*, who in the main defends the Sibylline Writings; for what ever may have been added through the officious, or miſtaken Zeal of any Chriſtians ſince, 'tis highly improbable that it ſhould have been ſo in *Celſus* his time, or as long as the Capitol ſtood, to which the Heathens would

(a) Juſtin *dedicates his Apology to* Antoninus Pius, *who began his Reign* A.Chriſti 139. *the Apology ſuppoſed to be wrote about the year* 150. vide Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. 4. c. 12. Cluv. Epit. Hiſt. p. 281. *Tallents Tables.*

(b) Clement *finiſht his Books under* Severus, *who died* A. C. 212. vid. Euſeb. l. 6. c. 5. Cluv. p. 294.

(c) Tertul. *cotemporary with* Clement. Vid. Cluv. p. 294

(d) v. Origen *lib. 7. pag. 369, edit.* Cant.

(e) v. Voſſius *de Sibyllinis Oraculis.*

would certainly have reported, to falsifie the Quotations made by the Christians, if they had not been exactly true. Nor can it be imagin'd how the Christians should at any time, after the birth of our Saviour, till the (b) burning of the Capitol, which was about the Year of Christ 395, be able to thrust in any spurious Copies among those which were received by the Heathens.

(b) Vid. Twisden's Disquis. *touching the* Sibyls, *p.* 178.

For before our Saviour's birth, (c) *Augustus* had made a Collection of those Books of the *Sibyls*, which upon examination were found authentick; these were laid up in two gilded Hutches, under the foot of a Pillar in the Temple of *Palatine Apollo*, where they were preserved as the most (d) sacred Possession which they had. And whereas at first two, and after that ten, were appointed the Keepers and Priests of those scatter'd Oracles, which they had formerly gathered together, fifteen had the Charge of this new Collection; and in all Emergencies of State, or portentous Accidents, these *Quindecemvirs* consulted the fatal Books, as they call'd them, by the Decree of the Senate, and without such Decree these Officers were not to acquaint the People with any Verse there.

(c) Vid. Sueton. in vitâ Augusti.

(d) Dionys. Halicarn. lib. 4. Rom. Antiq. οὐδὲν οὕτω Ῥωμαῖοι φυλάττουσιν οὔτε ὅσιον κτῆμα οὔτε ἱερὸν ὡς τὰ Σιβύλλεια θέσφατα. In Vopisci Aureliano juxta annum Christi 271. Vid. Formam Senatus consulti de inspiciendis fatalibus libris. Cicero de Div. Non enim licebat ullum Carmen Populo enuntiare nisi id Senatus decrevisset.

Nay, there was great care taken that they might not be cheated with new, or false Copies; when in *Tiberius* his time, *Caninius Gallus*, one of the *Quindecemvirs*, press'd for a Decree of the Senate, for having a Book then found, treasured among the other Writings of the *Sibyls* (whether there

Corn. Tacitus in vitâ Tiberii, lib. 6. *p.* 159. 160. Ed. Plantini.

there was but one, or more, *Tacitus*, who relates it, would not determine.) *Tiberius* tells him by Letter, that he was ignorant what was the ancient Custom upon such a discovery, which was, to have every Verse read and weighed in full Senate before it was received, and then the matter was to be left to the Priests, that they might use all possible humane means for discerning the true from false.

That the Christians therefore could not cheat them in this matter, and would have been disproved by authority of the Senate, if they made any false Quotations, cannot be doubted.

The only Question remaining is, How the Christians could come by any of these Writings, which were kept with so much caution, that none were admitted to them but the immediate Officers intrusted with them, nor could they publish them without a Decree from the Senate: And further yet, as it is in *Tiberius* his Letter mentioned by *Tacitus*, *Augustus* made a Law, That whenever any Copy of such Writings should occur, it should within a day be carried to the Pretor, or Mayor of the City, and that no private Person should retain any by him.

Tacitus lib. 6. p. 160. Sanxisse Augustum quod infra diem ad Pretorem Urbanum deferrentur, neq; habere privatim liceret.

Notwithstanding all which, it is easily supposable that the Christians, and others, might have made large Collections of those Predictions which were there treasured up: And *Augustus* his Decree seems to concern only what look'd like Originals, or were Copies from other parts, of which they had nothing in the Capitol.

But in *Tully*'s time the Sibylline Writings were in all peoples hands, and some seem to have

made a trade of (*t*) telling Fortunes by them, with the help of Lots.

(*t*) Cic. de Divinatione lib. 1. f. 261. Ed. per de Planches Quinc. Cicero, *speaking of the Erithræan Sibyl.* Cujus generis oracula etiam habenda sunt, non quæ æquatis sortibus ducuntur, sed quæ instinctu divino, afflatuq; funduntur. Vid. Van. Dale p. 335. Sibyllarum sortes datæ fere ubiq; occurrunt.

Cic. de Div. lib. 2. f. 295.

And *Tully* takes notice of a Decree of the Senate against the reading of those Books, as obsolete, and antiquated; But thinks it reasonable that this Decree should be revived to prevent Superstition; but then there was no restraint to keep *Tully*, and the other Enquirers of that Age, from satisfying their Curiosity about these; And several of their Verses are mentioned in the Authors of those Times, agreeably to which *Lactantius*, who was born within the third Century, says, that the Sibylline Verses which the Christians then urg'd against the Heathens, were taken out of *Tully*, *Varro*, and other Ancients, who died before Christ was born.

Vid. Petav. Rat. temp. p. 361. Lactantius lib. 4. c. 15.

And that these Verses were in many hands before the middle of the second Century after our Saviour, is evident in *Justin Martyr*, who imputes it to the prevalence of Devils, or *Dæmons*, that the Sibylline Books, among others, were then prohibited; yet, says he, "we not only possess "them without fear, but (as you see) offer them "to your view."

Just. Mart. Apol. 2. p. 64.

Which shews that the Prohibition extended only to Men of their own Rites; and the Decree against the reading of them, seems to have been revived to prevent the spreading of Christianity, not that it was always inforc'd. *Justin* says, the

the reading of these was made capital; 'That by 'fear they might turn away Men that are apt to 'believe the knowledg of Good; and that they 'may keep them Slaves to themselves. Just. Mart.

Upon three accounts it is easily to be conceiv'd, how the *Sybils* Verses should have been publick.

1. It might have been through the Treachery of Officers entrusted with them, who might have privately transcribed them, as *Attilius* did, who was one of the two entrusted with the Collection then made, and for the breach of that Trust suffered as a Parricide. Vid. *Short discourse of the truth and reasonableness of Christianity, Ed. An. 1662. p. 16.*

2. The occasions of consulting these Verses were very frequent and numerous; and the Verses which were then made publick were, no doubt, carefully preserv'd, and communicated from one to another. Vid. Livy *throughout.* Tully de Div. quoties Senatus Decemviros ad libros ire jussit? *&c.*

3. Those Writings which were kept in the Capitol before *Augustus* his time, were for the most part Transcripts from what were recorded in several parts of *Greece*; from amongst these and others, *Augustus* made his Collection; and as it was no difficult thing to have recourse to those places, from whence any of them had been transcribed; no more was it to have sufficient Evidence, which, among the Verses so recorded, were transcribed and carried into the Capitol. Vid. Dionys. Halicarn. lib. 4. f. 259. *who liv'd about 26 Years before Christ.* Vid. etiam Vandale *p.* 364. Disquif. *touching the Sibyls, pag.* 169. Quicquid fatidicorum librorum græci, latiniq; generis, *&c.* Suet. in vitâ Augusti.

Upon which Considerations, I should think it no more strange, that many Sibylline Writings should be in the hands of Christians while the Capitol stood, agreeing with Verses there recorded, than that several Copies of any Book, should agree with the same Original; and as the Christians, by quoting the *Sibyls* to the Heathens, shewed their assurance that the Quotations were

right, and of such Writings as the Heathens themselves received for Authorities; so their not being disproved in particular instances, shews, that that assurance was well grounded.

And this will be further evident, if any one of the Apostles at any time used these Authorities, either to Heathens, or Christians; for tho this Argument was not so necessary, that we ought to suppose the Apostles inspired to know the Contents of these Verses, before they came to their hands: Yet we cannot think, that the holy Spirit, which was to lead them into all Truth, would suffer them to quote any thing adulterate; nor is it to be imagined that any Christian then, could have counterfeited these Verses, and not be discovered.

Strom. lib. 6. pag. 636. Δηλώσει περὶ τῶν Πέτρου κηρύγματι ὁ Ἀποστολος Παῦλος, &c.

Clement of *Alexandria*, speaking of God's Mercy, not only to the then Christians, and Jews, but to the Gentiles also, and of his having raised up Prophets among them, says, "Besides the "Preaching of St. *Peter*, St. *Paul* manifests, or will manifest, the same, who says,

"Observe the Sibyl how she declares one God, "and the things which were to come: Take and "read *Hist aspes*, and there you will find it much "more clearly and plainly of the Son of God, &c.

That this passage is not to be found among the Writings of St. *Paul* now extant, is not of it self of greater weight, than if any of the Primitive Christians should have mentioned some expression, or action of our Saviour's, of which a clear Tradition then ran; tho it were not recorded by any of the Evangelists: whereas St. *John* concluding his Gospel, says;

John 21. 25. *And there were many other things which Jesus did,*

did, the which if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe the World it ſelf could not contain the Books that ſhould be written.

'Tis evident, by the manner of the Quotation, that what *Clement* cites as St. *Paul*'s words, were among them to whom he wrote, as much accounted St. *Paul*'s, as any paſſage which he cites from St. *Peter*, was thought to be his.

So that there is no more in this Objection, than that this has not been tranſmitted down to us, in the ſame manner with the reſt of S. *Paul*'s Writings.

But, circumſtances conſidered, we are not here ſo much as to examine whether *Clement*, who mentions this, was one of integrity; but the only Queſtion will be, Whether he, and others of that time, might have ſufficient evidence, whether any Writings, which went under the name of any Apoſtle, were in truth his whoſe name they then bore? Nor can there be any great Queſtion of this here, if we conſider, that *Clement* finiſh'd his Book in the time of the Emperour *Severus*, who died *Anno Chriſti* 212, St. *Paul* died about the Year 67 or 69; ſo that here were but 145 Years at the moſt, to preſerve the Tradition, and not 100 to *Clement*'s being of years of underſtanding; and *Polycarp*, a Diſciple of one of the Apoſtles, lived till the year of Chriſt 168. ſo that, with him at leaſt, *Clement*, and others then alive, might have converſed, and poſſibly with ſome of St. *Paul*'s own Followers.

Vid. Euſeb. Cluv. Epit. Petav.

Vid. Tallents Tables.

CHAP. II.

Clement's *Quotation of St.* Paul *vindicated from* Vandale's *Objection*; *and his Authorities from* Tully *turned upon him.*

SEveral Objections againſt the Authority of the Sibylline Writings have been heretofore made by *Iſaac Caſaubon*, *David Blondel*, and others, who are fully anſwered by my Learned Friend Dr. *Twiſden*, whoſe Treatiſe on this Subject may be ſufficient to ſilence the moſt Sceptical.

Vid. Diſquiſ. *touching the Sibyls.*

But lately one *Vandale* a Dutch-man, who I ſuppoſe had not Engliſh enough to underſtand Dr. *Twiſden*, and who has no great reaſon to boaſt of his Country Air as the moſt refined, reflects upon thoſe who give credit to ſuch things, as if they were;

Bœotum in terrâ, craſſoq; ſub aere nati.

Vandale de Oraculis *p.* 13.

"Born in a Land of Dolts, and foggy Air.

I find but two Heads inſiſted on by *Vandale*, which may ſeem to deſerve a particular Animadverſion.

1. The firſt is, his endeavour to prove by St. *Paul* himſelf, that he never urg'd the Sibylline, or other Ethnick Predictions.

2. The other is, *Vandale*'s improvement of what occurs in *Tully*, relating to the Sibylline Predictions.

1. His

1. His authority from St. *Paul* is taken out of *Ephes.* 3. 5, 6. concerning the knowledg of the myſtery of Chriſt: one Verſe of which, leaving out the other, *Vandale* has taken the liberty to render, *Quod nullis aliis ſeculis declaratum ſit hominum generi; ut ſuo tempore pateſactum eſſet Sanctis DEI Apoſtolis, ac Prophetis, divinâ inſpiratione.* Vandale, p. 7. Verſ. 5.

'Which was not declared to Mankind in any 'other Age; that in its, or his time, it might be 'revealed to God's holy Apoſtles and Prophets, 'by divine Inſpiration.

If this were a true Tranſlation, it might go a great way towards his Concluſion, that the whole Myſtery was reſerved for the Apoſtles and Prophets of that time.

But this differs widely from the Original, Ὁ ἑτέραις γενεαῖς οὐκ ἐγνωρίσθη τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὡς νῦν ἀπεκαλύφθη, &c. Verſ. 5.

Which in former Generations, or Ages, was not made known unto the Sons of Men, as it is now, or in this Age, revealed unto his holy Apoſtles and Prophets, by the Spirit.

That the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-Heirs, and of the ſame body, and partakers of his Promiſe in Chriſt by the Goſpel. Verſ. 6.

If any of the *Sibyls* wrote but within that Age wherein Chriſt was born, their Predictions might come within this Proviſion.

However 'tis evident from the Text, that God's Spirit had communicated this divine Light to the Gentiles, or at leaſt for the benefit of them, as well as of others; and no more can be inferr'd to *Vandale's* purpoſe, than that the Spirit of Prophecy was more reſtrain'd in former times.

To

To say there were no Revelations before concerning the *Messiah*, were to deny the holy Writ which records the Prophecies among the Jews; nay, and that of *Baalam* the *Moabitish* Sorcerer. Numb. 24. 17.

Yet there is no doubt but the Apostles and Prophets under the Gospel, had a more steady Light to guide them; and herein the Sibyls seem to have been far short of the Christian or Jewish Prophets.

1. That they themselves understood not the true meaning of what they spake in a Divine Fury.

2. Nor could they bring any Evidence to satisfy the World of the truth of what they foretold; and therefore, how clear soever the Predictions seemed by the Event, they were obscure till then, and of little or no use at first, especially in comparison with those which were uttered for the Comfort of God's People, and were often publickly attested by convincing Miracles.

3. And the People among whom they were delivered, had not those Anticipations, or Pre-dispositions, which might fit them for the recieving that Light. So that what would have brought clear Day to others, could make but a very little dawning with them, by reason of that thick Darkness which encompass'd them; and upon that account their Light was to be accounted weak, as not able to disperse the Clouds which lay in the way; and by how much the stronger Rays were requisite, by so much were their Illuminations the more imperfect.

2. The second Head observable in *Vandale* is, what he urges out of *Tully*, who, in his first Book

Cic. de Div. lib. 1.

Book of Divination, represents his Brother *Quinctius* his Arguments to shew, that there was such a thing as a fore-knowledg of future Contingences; for which *Tully* owns, that he brought many (*a*) clear and illustrious Instances known among the Romans.

Being to answer his Brothers Arguments he says; He (*b*) *affirms nothing, in all things is only upon the enquiry, for the most part doubts, and distrusts himself, or his own Arguments.*

(*a*) Quodque me maximè delectat, pluribus nostris exemplis usus es iis quidem claris & illustribus. Cic. de Divin. *lib.* 2.

(*b*) Dicendum est mihi igitur adeo quæ sunt à te dicta; sed ita nihil ut affirmem, quæram omnia, dubitans plerumque, & mihi ipse diffidens. ib.

And that which he seems most to triumph in, is, rather a cavilling at the definition of Divination given by his Brother, than a disproving the possibility that the Gods should certainly foreknow what is to come to pass, and communicate that knowledg to Men, without destroying the nature of Contingency by any compelling necessity.

Divinationem esse earum rerum prædictionem, & præsentionem, quæ essent fortuitæ. v. *lib.* 1. & 2.

1. When he comes to object against the Authority of the Sibylline Writings, one Objection, is their obscurity, and the uncertainty of Time, Person, or the like, to which they may be applied: But in this *Vandale* and I, may say all Disputers against these since our Saviour's time, are so far from agreeing with *Cicero*, that the Objection most commonly insisted on, is, their clearness, and certainty.

Tully's first Objection against the Sibyls.

2. Another is, that the Acrosticks, in which sort of Verse the Predictions, or most of them, were wrote, shew them to be rather the Effect of Art and Diligence, than of Incitation and Fury: As if that Power which inspired the Sibyl, could

Vid. Vandale, *pag.* 39.

could not as well do it in that manner, as in one more negligent: Besides, it could not derogate from the Prediction, if the substance of what was imprinted on the Mind, from whatever Spirit, was afterwards regularly digested; if this were before what was foretold came to pass.

3. The last Objection is against the Faithfulness of the Officers, who were entrusted with this their sacred Possession.

One of the Predictions, which in *Tully's* time was pronounced as fitting for the occasion on which they were then consulted, being that mentioned by *Grotius*.

Vid. Lib. 4. §. 9.

Quem re verâ Regem habebamus, appellandum: quoq; esse Regem si salvi esse vellemus.

'That he who in truth was our King, ought 'to be called or owned for King, if we would 'be safe, or sav'd.

Tully, who was an Enemy to the name of King, says,

Cum Antistitibus agamus, ut quidvis potius ex illis libris quam Regem proferant:

'Let us manage the matter so with the Offi-'cers, that they produce out of those Books any 'thing rather than a King.

Vandale *pag.* 468, 469.

Upon this *Vandale* enlarges, as if it were a meer trick of State, and that the Officers made the *Sibyls* speak what should be thought for the advantage of the Senate, to whom the Verses were to be first shewn; wherefore, says he, *Cato*, who durst not wholly tax them of Fiction, would have them seen by the People first: admit this to have been never so true, yet it can signifie nothing here, in relation to those Verses which so plainly describe our Saviour, as shews

that

that they could not be counterfeited to ſerve any Intereſt of their State.

Beſides, no more can be inferr'd from *Tully*'s words, than that the Officers, among thoſe which were the true Verſes, took out ſuch as they thought fit for the preſent occaſion: nor was more implied in *Cato*'s demand, which had took effect, than that 'twas reaſonable the People, as well as the Senate, ſhould have a Judgment of what was fit then to be divulg'd, leſt they ſhould be kept from the knowledg of what might be of great benefit to them: and this (c) *Dion* ſhews that *Cato* aimed at.

(c) Dion. lut. Cato veritus ne id ſuppreme-retur, &c.

But notwithſtanding all that *Cicero* urges for diſputation ſake, I conceive his Letters to *Lentulus* ſhew, that he did not contemn the Sibylline Writings.

Vid. Cic. Ep. ad Lentul. 5.

Ptolomy, King of *Egypt*, was forc'd to fly to *Rome* for Protection againſt his Rebellious Subjects: having been there for ſome time, and being made acquainted with a Prediction, which he thought fore-told, that he ſhould be carried back into his Kingdom without Arms; he preſt hard, and bribed high, to have this effected for him. *Dion*, who lived about 200 Years after, ſays, that it was contained in the *Sibyls* Books. 'If 'a King of *Egypt* come wanting Aid, do not de-'ny him Friendſhip, but help him with no 'Forces; for if you do, you will have trouble 'and danger. And to the ſame purpoſe the Poet *Lucan*, who died *Anno Chriſti*, 65, had it before.

Cic. Epiſt. ad Lentulum 4.

Cluv. Ep. Hiſt.

Haud equidem inmerito Cumana carmine Vatis
Cautum, ne Nilo Peluſia tangeret ora,
Heſperius Miles———

Luc. lib. 8.

The

Th'*Italian* Souldiers of *Egyptian* Ain,
Cumean Sibyl justly bids beware.

This either was the opinion of the Priests upon the words of the Prediction, or else was the account spread after the Birth of Christ, whose carrying into *Egypt* exactly agrees with *Tully*'s account of this Prediction, which was, That a King should be carried into *Egypt* without a multitude, and was never verified in any other, than this Spiritual King. It being thought that *Ptolemy* was the Person design'd by the Prediction, there was great striving for the Honour of executing the purpose of the Gods in carrying him home.

Vid. Ep. ad Lent. 7. infra.

This *Lentulus* was very ambitious of, and had a former Decree of the Senate on his side: *Cicero* lays a project for his performing this, which was, that he should place *Ptolemy* at *Ptolemais*, or some neighbouring place, from whence he should go to *Alexandria* with a Navy and Army, and when he had setled it in peace and well garison'd it, then *Ptolemy* might return into his Kingdom. *ita fore ut per te restituatur, quemadmodum Senatus initio censuit, & sine multitudine reducatur, quemadmodum homines religiosi Sibyllæ placere dixerunt.*

Vid. Cic. Ep. ad Lentul. 7.

'So he may be restored by you, as the Senate 'at first decreed, and may be brought back with-'out a multitude, as the religious men said it pleases the Sibyl.

And what was *Cicero*'s Opinion concerning this matter, appears by a passage in his fourth Epistle to *Lentulus*.

Epist. 4.

Nemo

Nemo est qui nescius, quo minus discessio fieret per adversarios tuos esse factum, qui nunc Populi Romani nomine, re autem verâ sceleratissimo latrocinio: si qua conabuntur agere satis provisum est, ut ne quid Salvis auspiciis, aut Legibus, aut etiam sine vi, agere possint.

'No Man is ignorant that your departure is 'stopt by your Adversaries, who use the name of 'the People of *Rome* to cover the most infamous 'Robbery: If they attempt any thing, sufficient 'care is taken to make it known, that nothing 'can be done without contemning the Prophecy, 'and the Laws, and indeed without force.

Where he charges *Lentulus* his Opposers as the most wicked Robbers, or Invaders of that Right, which he looks upon as given him by the Prediction, and the Law, meaning the first Decree of the Senate; and tells *Lentulus* that he had acquainted the People with this.

'Tis very improbable that *Cicero* (as *Vandale* would have him) look'd upon Religion but as a Pretence, when he himself ules its Authority: indeed he says 'twas the Opinion of the Common People, that Religion was but pretended in the business.

Epist. 4. Hæc tamen opinio est populi Romani à suis invidis & obtrectatoribus nomen inductum fictæ Religionis, non tam ut te impedirent, quàm ut aequis propter exercitus suppeditatem Alexandriam vellet re.

But herein is demonstration, that *Cicero* thought the Sibilline Writings sacred, in that he opposed *Cato*'s pressing to have the Verses relating to that occasion publish'd, as nefarious, or prophane; and of such a nature, that the fear of it diverted him from the immediate service of his Friend, as what was of much less consequence.

Nos,

Ep. ad Lent. 5. *Nos*, says he, *cum maxime Concilio, ſtudio, labore, gratiâ, de causâ regiâ niteremur; ſubito exorta eſt nefaria Catonis promulgatio, quæ noſtra ſtudia impediret, & animos a minore curâ ad ſummum timorem traduceret, &c. Catoni quidem quoquo modo ſeſe res habeat profecto reſiſtimus.*

'When we were uſing our utmoſt endeavours, 'by Counſel, ſtudy, labour, favour, in the Cauſe 'of the King; of a ſudden *Cato*'s nefarious pro-'mulgation hapned; which gave us an interrup-'tion, and diverted our minds from a leſs care, to 'a Fear of the higheſt nature, &c.

'What ever is the conſequence of it as to our 'affair, I think it my duty to reſiſt *Cato*.

Theſe Paſſages compared together, make it evident, that *Cicero* was far from contemning the Sibylline Writings: but admit he ſlighted them never ſo much, yet no Man can evade thoſe Teſtimonies which he involuntarily gave to Chriſtianity, in ſhewing, that before Chriſt was born there were Predictions preſerved in the Capitol, and publiſhed in *Rome*, which ſpake,

1. Of a King, whom Men ought to own for their King, if they will be ſaved.

2. Of a King to be carried into *Egypt* without a Multitude; which could not agree with King *Ptolemy*, for he was carried thither by *Gabinius*, with a powerful Army, which beat out *Archelaus*, whom the *Egyptians* had ſet up for King.

Clav. Epit. Hiſt. p. 215.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

What is offered in the two foregoing Chapters, confirm'd by Virgil's *fourth Eclogue, and the Translation of it asserted.*

THat the first was meant of the Salvation of Mankind, by one, whom all ought to own for King, can be no question to any who shall impartially consider the first Eclogue of *Virgil* in the Original, or my Essay towards a Translation of it; which, tho it lose much of the Spirit by the Transfusion, I shall here justify to be so far true, that there is nothing inserted or varied from the genuine import of *Virgil's* Expressions, to make the Prediction more plainly to denote our Saviour, than *Virgil's* account makes it.

Tho *Vandale* thinks it a meer Dream that *Virgil*, or others, were permitted the Inspection of the Sibylline Verses through *Augustus* his favour, yet elsewhere he owns, that tho the Books were not to be consulted without a Decree of the Senate; yet in *Jul. Cæsar's* time the Officers made an inspection by the sole Authority or Direction of *Cæsar*, who was Emperor, and Chief Pontif: And if in this the ancient course of expecting the Senate's Decree was broken, why might not *Augustus* as well break the other, and order that a private Person should have the inspection?

Vandale *p.* 90.

Quicquid nonnulli somnient *p.* 460.

But however *Vandale* himself owns, that these Verses were dispersi through all *Grecia*, *Asia*, *Africa*, and other Regions, when *Augustus* made

Vandale *p.* 364.

his Collection; and where *Virgil* saw them is not greatly material here, but that he had seen Verses which pass'd for *Cumæan Sibyl's*, and wrote to one who is presumed not to have been unacquainted with them, appears, when he says;

Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas.

Nor can *Pollio* well be thought to have been a Stranger to the Predictions of the *Sibyls*, being the first, who, by *Augustus* his order, afterwards made a publick Library at *Rome*; which must have been, as he was thought the fittest for such a charge.

Vid. Tallents Tab. Chron.

The Commentators seem industriously to cast a Cloud over *Virgil's* Representation of the Prediction, which he mentions to *Pollio*: and will have it that this Poem was made to celebrate the Birth of *Pollio's* Son, that some Eclogues are applied by *Virgil* to *Pollio* himself, others to *Augustus*, the rest to the Son of *Pollio*.

Where they seem to mind neither the time when it was wrote, the manner of the Expressions, nor the contexture of the Poem, which of one of the most noble and best turn'd that *Virgil* ever wrote, they would make confused, and unworthy any Man of Judgment.

Pighii Annales Rom. *f.* 484.

The Poem it self shews, that 'twas composed in *Pollio's* Consulship, which was in the Year 713, after the building of *Rome*, about 14 before Christ, this was during the *Triumvirat* of *Octavius*, *Anthony*, and *Lepidus*; wherefore I cannot think that there is any ground to believe, that *Virgil* spake otherwise, than only of what should happen in *Pollio's* Consulship, when he says,

Te

Te Duce, ſi qua manent ſceleris veſtigia noſtri,
Irrita perpetuâ ſolvent formidine terras.

This indeed a great Poet has rendred,

" The Father baniſh'd Vertue ſhall reſtore, *Mr.* Dreyden.
" And Crimes ſhall threat the guilty World
" no more.

And the Commentators take *Te Duce*, to be the ſame with *Te Authore*, and that *Virgil* means either *Auguſtus*, or *Pollio*, and the Crimes to be the Civil Wars, between *Auguſtus* and *Anthony* at *Mutina*: whereas this was before *Octavius* took the name of *Auguſtus*; nor is there any thing to lead to him here: Beſides, *Octavius* and *Anthony* were reconciled at leaſt the Year before *Pollio*'s Conſulſhip, and *Pollio* was on *Anthony*'s ſide while the diviſion laſted; ſo that there is no colour to think that *Virgil* meant that *Pollio* was to compoſe the Civil War after it was over, or to impute to him the Succeſs of the oppoſite Party. V. Epit. ad Livium *lib.* 120.

There were more of colour in the Suppoſition, that *Pollio* being one of the three, who were appointed to divide the Lands of ſome, who were Criminals in oppoſing *Octavius* his having the Command of the Army, tho decreed by the Senate: *Virgil*, having been connived at by *Pollio*, thanks him for freeing him from the fear of what he might juſtly have expected to ſuffer; yet I queſtion whether *Virgil* would term one the Author of what he did, as joint Commiſſioner with others; nor would he upon ſuch an account ſay, V. Virgilii vitam.

Perpetuâ ſolvent formidine terras.

As if the whole Earth were concerned in *Virgil*'s Fears.

And by attending to the time when this was wrote, we find that

——— *tuus jam regnat Apollo.*

And

Pacatumq; reget patriis virtutibus Orbem,

could not be meant of *Auguſtus*, who aſſumed not that name till the Battel of *Actium* was over, which was about the Year of *Rome* 718, five Years after *Pollio*'s Conſulſhip, when this Poem was wrote.

Beſides, tuus Apollo *is ſpoke in relation to* Latona, *Siſter to* Apollo. V. Epit. ad Livium c. 134. V. Petav.

2. If we obſerve the manner of the Expreſſions, we ſhall find, that whereas *Pollio*'s Son is reputed the chief Subject of the Poem; how much ſoever a Poet may be allowed to ſtrain his Characters, no Man can imagine that *Virgil* would aſcribe ſuch high and mighty things to the Son of a Conſul, when he was little more than Titular, under the check of the *Triumvirs*; durſt he call him the Offspring of the Gods, the great encreaſe of *Jove*, and ſuppoſe that he ſhould reſtore the Golden Age, and that Heaven it ſelf expects ſupport from him? this would have been no leſs than *Crimen læſæ Majeſtatis.*

But, to put this out of Controverſy, 'tis all applied to one who was expected to be born; when the Commentors will have it in celebration of *Pollio*'s Son's Birth.

3. If we obſerve the Connexion of one Verſe to another.

It

It appears that *Decus ævi*, the Grace, or Glory of that Age, who was to restore the Age of Gold, was expected to be born during *Pollio's* Consulship, that while he was Consul the Sins of Mankind were to be taken away; nor can any think it supposed to be done by any other, than by him who is called the great encrease of *Jove*, who was to ascend into Heaven, and to govern the World with his Father's Vertues, which I may well render by *expressing his Father*.

The Clouds being thus removed, these Particulars appear with a clear Light.

1. That the *Cumæan Sybil* spake of a Virgin, which might then perhaps be thought meant of *Astræa*, because of the glorious things said of her. Jam redit & Virgo.

2. That there was expected a wonderful Revolution, a Restauration of the state of Innocence, or Golden Age, such as the Poets fancied to have been in *Saturn's* Reign, and in truth was under the Primitive Theocracy.

3. That this was to be at the Birth of a Man-Child, to whom are ascribed such things as no poetical License, without warrant from a Prophecy or Prediction, could excuse.

And tho I may seem to strain, where I call him (the Rythm requiring it) Earth's King, nothing less can be implied from,

Pacatumq; reget patriis virtutibus orbem,
Aggredere, ô magnos, aderit jam tempus, honores.
Adspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,
Terrasq; Tractatusq; Maris Cœlumq; profundum.
Adspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia sæclo, &c.

Where

Where the Poet invites him to enter upon his appointed Honour, or Office, of governing the World, nay, and Heaven it ſelf.

Could theſe things be with any colour aſcribed to the Son of *Pollio?* Nay: and does he not ſuppoſe him to be more than Man, not only where he ſays,

Ille Deum vitam accipiet, &c.
Chara Deum ſoboles———

But more plainly, where he calls him,

———Magnum Jovis incrementum:

Where the Increaſe of *Jove* ſeems to ſhew, that tho he had an Hypoſtaſis, or Perſonality, diſtinct from the Great God, yet is one God with him, *Jove* being ſpread out or encreas'd, with another Perſon, but his Godhead undivided.

With thoſe Divine Myſteries which *Virgil* reports from the *Sybil*, he ſeems to joyn ſome poetical Flouriſhes of his own, as that the Earth ſhould pay this Infant an early Tribute of its Stores; that when he grows up the Oak ſhould yeild Honey; and that when he is arrived to Manhood, Nature ſhould die the Flocks with the moſt pleaſing Colours without the help of Art, and the like.

But I know not but another part, which is interpreted of a fancied Platonical Revolution, may have a truly moral Signification.

Pauca tamen ſuberunt veteris veſtigia fraudis,
Alter erit tum Tiphys, &c.

Where

Where this may ſeem not ſo much to foretell from Prophetical Inſpiration, as by a moral Judgment; that tho former Sins were purged away, yet that would not remove the capacity of ſinning, but that the ſame, or like Crimes and Follies, ſhould be in the World again, till the ſubject of the Prophecy ſhould come to maturity.

Hinc ubi jam firmata virum te fecerit ætas.

Which might be rendred; Till the perfect Age of the Church. And this perhaps a Millenary would apply, as a Prediction of Chriſt's Reign, at his return to the Earth before the general Reſurrection.

But waving what may be doutful, or wholly poetical; what has been here ſaid, together with the account how carefully the *Sybils* Prophecies were kept, and examined by the *Romans*, and with the Juſtification of the Primitive Chriſtians in their Appeals to them; may ſatisfy any Man, who impartially conſiders, that *Virgil*'s fourth Eclogue is, in the main, an account of the *Cumæan Sybil*'s Prediction, of ſuch an one expected to be born about that time, as Chriſtians maintain, and none could ever with any colour deny, the Author of their Faith to have been.

That this account was wrote before the Birth of our Saviour, can be no queſtion, unleſs we will think that ſome Chriſtian, was not only Poet good enough to counterfeit *Virgil*'s Vein, but had the art to ſlide it in ſo well, and ſo early, that none ſhould be able to diſcover the Cheat, by ſhewing any Copies wherein this was omitted. And beſides, all this Artifice would have been

been to no purpose, unless at the same time he could have prevailed upon the Keepers of the Sybilline Writings in the Capitol, to let some Verses be foisted in to countenance the matter.

For tho this Account was given by *Virgil* before *Augustus* made his Collection; yet we should have heard of it before now, if there had been nothing in the Capitol to warrant *Virgil's* Quotations.

And in truth, the lewd Interpretations which have been put upon this Poem, shew, that 'twas thought more easy to cast a blind, by making *Virgil* write with unallowable poetical License, and without any manner of coherence, than to gain Credit in the denial that this Poem was *Virgil's*. If they believ'd their own Interpretations; we may well say, 'twas because they thought of no Person to whom they might apply the Character, which no Man, after reading the Scriptures, and *Grotius*, can deny to belong to our Saviour, and to him only.

FINIS.